

ASSESSING STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENT
SUPPORT SERVICES ASSESSMENT FOR TRIBAL COLLEGES

by

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ABSTRACT

Student support services assessment is a valuable component of research for all tribal colleges. The data that is gathered by an assessment tool designed to meet the specific needs of the college's students and provide essential information for program improvements needed to ensure that the college meets the academic and nonacademic needs of its students. Although assessment in the areas of academics has been an essential part of the college's process to demonstrate institutional effectiveness, the assessment of student support services programs is fairly new. Student support services serves a crucial role in providing a holistic picture of student learning.

In order to gather baseline data and begin the process of student support services assessment, the institution must identify the best practices it currently utilizes to support students outside of the classroom. Although examining the best practices is an essential part of the process, additional parts of developing a well-rounded assessment plan will include: reviewing the structure of student support services at other institutions, implementing a data team, developing mission statements and goals specific to the student support services area, creating student learning objectives that are measurable, creating a tool that meets the needs of the institution, and a well-organized plan for data collection and reporting.

The product created in this dissertation utilizes the best practices in assessment to create a guide for assessing student support services at Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College. By using the current literature that supports assessment and meeting with a variety of leaders on campus, the author developed an assessment guide with the mission and purpose of tribal college students in mind. This assessment guide will be used for internal improvements at the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, and the data collected during the process will be utilized for accreditation purposes.

KEY WORDS: assessment, student support services, tribal college

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Ryan, and my children, Ryan and Zachary, who have been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of graduate school and life. I am truly thankful for having you in my life. This is also dedicated to my parents, L.E. and Susan Reed, who have always loved me unconditionally and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The ability to measure student satisfaction and document student experience is essential for higher education institutions to provide students with the services needed to support their success. The student population at tribal colleges faces several academic and nonacademic challenges from day one. These challenges lead some students to arrive on campus not only underprepared for a college-ready curriculum but with additional nonacademic issues that may include an inability to secure proper housing, food, and/or transportation. In order to ensure the institution is providing student support that addresses the student holistically, the assessment of student services programs on a systematic basis is vital.

In order to ensure institutional effectiveness, academic program, nonacademic program, and cocurricular assessments must be set as equal priorities. The following will address nonacademic program assessment, which includes all student services programs, and the importance to report on academic, nonacademic, and cocurricular institutional learning outcomes, in the same manner.

The student services programs include several processes that provide students access to their academic and nonacademic information. These processes include, but are not limited to, the ability for a student to add/drop a class, the withdrawal process, the process of applying for financial aid and meeting student academic progress, the opportunity to create a student success plan that identifies an internal and external resource, and the ability to complete a program map and explore transfer opportunities to a four-year institution. Suskie (2018) defines assessment as “deciding what we want our students to learn and making sure they learn it” (p. 7). Although this definition is used when discussing the academic side of the institution, the lessons that students must learn through the student services programs are just as vital as those they learn in the classroom. Bresciani (2002) supports the prioritizing student services program assessment of this statement:

If done in a meaningful manner, assessment in student support services could reinforce or emphasize the mission of each student support services unit; modify, shape, and improve programs and/or performance; critique a program’s quality or value compared to the program’s

previously defined principles; inform planning; inform decision making; inform the request for additional funds from the university and external community; and assist in meeting accreditation requirements, models of best practices, and national benchmarks. (p. 99)

Student services program assessment at tribal colleges can be done by utilizing a framework that is culturally respectful, relevant, and meaningful to the institution and the students they serve. The framework sets clear goals and gives attention to the resources invested in the assessment process to allow an efficient and effective delivery of the process.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES ASSESSMENT

The assessment of student support services programs is a powerful tool that will assist the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College (SCTC) to better serve the community and accomplish their mission. More specifically, assessment of student support services is a systematic process of collecting, understanding, and utilizing information regarding student performance and perceptions to improve providing student supports, enhancing student learning, and advancing a college's mission. Although many postsecondary institutions may struggle with their assessment programs and efforts, educators increasingly recognize assessment as a priority for internal improvement as well as for accreditation purposes. SCTC has substantial motivation to succeed in their assessment efforts, in large part because of their unique mission and focus on the self-determination of Native students. Tribal colleges make the needs of their students' top priority and work hard to support the community they serve; and yet the individualized methods used to support student success are often criticized by those at mainstream institutions. The definition of student success for mainstream institutions is driven by the requirements for continued funding. These requirements force institutions to place their primary focus on timely student completion and graduation rates due to the ties it has to institutional funding rather than looking at other forms of success.

Tribal colleges are allowed to make their students their priority by assisting the student in defining their success through a number of processes and supporting them along their journey. For example, when SCTC's student success coach asked students what success looks like to them, their responses included:

- Achieving the degree and be able to help women by opening a women's shelter.
- Working in dream job which includes reading and literature.

- Doing what I love and working with people.
- To have stability and to be able to afford to take trips with my family.
- To follow my passions and be a leader.
- To be able to do what I love; write a book.
- To make money and have the freedom to do what I want.
- To help people feel emotions through my art.
- Get a degree. Get a job making more money and be able to travel more.
- To be in a career that I enjoy.
- A lifelong learner. To continue education as long as I can.
- To have a job in Higher Education.
- Make more money and have the freedoms to do what I want.
- To always be learning and growing. To feel happy, be inspired and inspire others.
- Being able to work outside with nature.
- Learn Ojibwe and make grandma proud. To know more of my culture.
- To live immersed in my culture and doing my part in food sovereignty.
- Working in Indigenous Studies. Understanding and learning about our ancestors.
- To be an example for my community.
- To contribute and inspire more cultural avenues at my tribe.
- To get a degree in Native American Studies and be able to advocate.
- To inspire others by telling my own life's story.
- To help my Tribal community the best I can.
- To raise my son in our culture and be able to serve my Tribal community.
- To be an example for my son and follow my dreams.

Tribal college students at SCTC link their educational success to the impact that it will have on their culture and community. This view seems to be much different than the definitions that are commonly referred to when discussing student success of students attending mainstream institutions. In a research project titled, *Defining and measuring academic success: Practical assessment, research, and evaluation*

(2015), York et al. synthesize a definition of student success based upon the literature as: “academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational outcomes, and post-college performance” (p. 5). This definition is specifically for “student success”; however, based upon the literature reviewed, I have found the terms “student success” and “academic success” used interchangeably.

It seems that the use of the terms “student success” and “academic success” used interchangeably is the problem. Why are institutions allowing the measurement of academic success to be the only measurement that is linked back to the success of a student?

Tribal colleges must continue to push forward with new initiatives and programs that allow the needs of its students be recognized, addressed, and supported in a manner that allows the student to achieve their defined success and is accountable to all the college’s stakeholders, while building a culture of evidence that proves their accountability. Although securing funding and financial support will always be a need for tribal colleges, this does not distract tribal colleges from making the student’s journey their main concern.

Recently, SCTC implemented a student success coach who is responsible for assisting students in writing a success plan. This support allows students to identify their “why” from the start of their journey and use that to refer to when they begin to struggle; the success coach provides two or three resources to guide the conversation in each section of the plan. Once the success plan is complete, the coach shifts to using check-in meetings to assess the plan and modify it as needed, and a new success plan is created each semester. The success coach process begins with an initial assessment. The student completes an assessment form to help the coach identify factors that may be academic-related such as reading and writing development, basic computer skills, basic mathematics, or general study skills. Additionally, the student is asked about their understanding or need for nonacademic supporting. These areas are related to understanding technology, homework and tutoring assistance, time management, fiscal management, anxieties, etc. These factors may be negatively impacting the student’s college experience even before they step foot in the classroom. The student then identifies goals to help them navigate their semester and identifies a support network based upon factors identified above. A network framework is utilized to

identify gaps in their personal network. The academic support network would consist of campus resources that support the student including requesting accommodations, planning classes, financial aid, and career planning. The identified support must align with the assessment and goals outlined in section one to assist the student with navigating their semester.

The student is then directed to look at short-term and long-term academic planning. For short-term planning, the student confirms that they have enrolled in their classes for the next semester. For long-term planning, the student has created a degree completion or transfer completion plan, and it has been approved by their academic advisor. The student's weekly schedule is also created to establish a routine and provide dedicated time to academic and personal responsibilities. This process not only allows students to define a plan for success but also allows the institution to collect data that will allow them to build a culture of evidence for the justification of the services that they provide to support their students. The data collected from success coaching, along with other student support services programs, is paired with data collected from the academic side to prove an institution's accountability.

By creating a process that helps identify shortfalls and successes of student services programs, it allows for a culture of evidence to be build and the leads to evidence that will demonstrate the impact the student services programs are making on the current culture of the institution. Oburn (2005) supports the utilization of both academic and nonacademic assessments by stating "two parts of the institution are required to build the culture of evidence to prove an institution's accountability. Curriculum effectiveness on the academic side of the institution but be paired with the successful contribution for the programs offered by student services" (p. 19-20).

The assessment guide that is created in chapter 5 is a tool that allows the student support services programs to provide documented data that leads to the evidence needed in proving the institution's accountability. The document was created utilizing the basics of any assessment plan but also customized to capture the student voice and ensure that the programs and processes are designed to support tribal college students holistically. Bresciani (2002) offers a sample assessment plan outline for student support services that includes:

- Unit or program mission: State the unit or program mission.
- Unit or program goals or objectives: Describe what the unit intends to accomplish and illustrate the purposes for assessment.

- Learning and development outcomes
- Evaluation methods
- Implementation of assessment
- Results
- Decisions and recommendations

This outline provides the basic elements of an assessment plan that can be adapted to meet the needs of all institutions. When reviewing the plan, the principal element is that the results of the assessment can be used to make necessary program changes, move implementation of innovative programs and/or services forward, and provide a quality reflection of the program in general.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The ability to increase student involvement is one of the most identified desires of the faculty, staff, and administrators on all college campuses. Astin (1999) identifies a student development theory based on student involvement. He discusses the basic elements of the theory that include “physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518). Astin (1999) identifies two types of students, one labeled involved and the other noninvolved. The involved student is defined as one who contributes much of their energy to their studies, participates in student organizations, spends time on campus, and interacts frequently with other students, faculty, and administrators. The noninvolved student is one who does the exact opposite by not spending any time on campus, displays low energy in their studies, and has infrequent contact with other students, faculty, and administrators on campus. The ability to increase student involvement for both types of students must be the main goal of student support services.

Additionally, a student’s sense of belonging also contributes to their sense of involvement on campus. Astin (1999) states,

The 1975 study of dropouts also produced some interesting findings regarding the “fit” between student and college: Students are more likely to persist at religious colleges if their own religious backgrounds are similar; Blacks are more likely to persist at Black colleges than at White colleges; and students from small towns are more likely to persist in small rather than in large colleges. The origin of such effects probably lies in the student’s ability to identify with the institution. It is easier to become involved when one can identify with the college environment. (p. 524)

The data provided collected from the program review process can be used as evidence showing the impact student services programs are having on our students. Additionally, data can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of each program to make changes that will increase the institution's effectiveness. This is essential for continuous improvement.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

SCTC is a public community college located in central Michigan. The college opened in 1998 after the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe adopted a resolution that would establish the college as a tribally controlled institution governed by a board of regents. The college's primary effort is to support tribal members through their journey to educational success. However, the college has a passion to support all students in the surrounding community that are eager to achieve their goals.

Currently there are 32 fully accredited tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) in the United States. These tribal colleges offer hundreds of programs to students who are interested in pursuing credentials ranging from earning high school equivalency to graduate degrees. Tribal colleges are in the Midwest and Southwest, serving approximately 30,000 students. According to fall 2010 enrollment data, 8.7% of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) college students were attending one of the 32 accredited TCUs. AI/AN students composed 78% of the combined total enrollment of these institutions (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.). The percentages of AI/AN students attending TCUs are increasing yearly. According to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of American Indian and Alaskan Native students enrolled in TCUs increased by 23% between 2001 and 2006 (White House, 2021).

Tribal colleges are known to be both vital and essential to their tribal communities by creating and providing communities an environment that fosters the culture, languages, and traditions of their ancestors. TCUs are often the only postsecondary institutions within some of our nation's poorest rural areas and serve a variety of people, from young adults to senior citizens, including both American Indians and non-American Indians. Additionally, TCUs are known to be community resources for crucial social services and add optimism to communities that suffer from high rates of poverty and unemployment. Overall, TCUs have developed programs where students are achieving. The American Indian College Fund reports that 86% of TCU students complete their chosen program of study, while fewer than 10% of

AI/AN students who go directly from reservation high schools to mainstream colleges and universities finish their bachelor's degree (White House, 2021).

SCTC was chartered by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe in 1998 with the purpose of creating an institution of higher education to serve: Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe members and their descendants; American Indians; Saginaw Chippewa Indian tribe employees and the general population. In 2007, SCTC became an accredited higher education organization. This accomplishment moved the vision of the Tribal Council to “enable Native Americans to achieve a significant position in the world’s emerging economy to a reality” (SCTC, n.d., p. 4). As a tribal college, it is critical that SCTC maintains a dual purpose: to provide for the educational needs of our community and to continue to educate our students on their Anishinaabe culture. While this success provides the opportunity of higher education to Native Americans, it does so while promoting values, history, traditions, and wisdom of the Anishinaabe.

Like other tribal colleges, SCTC had very modest beginnings. Originally, in 1998, the college consisted of an office, two classrooms, and a computer lab in the Nish-na-be-anong residential area of the Isabella Indian Reservation, the first federally funded housing project on the reservation erected in the late 1960s. The office and computer lab then relocated to the Tribal Operations building, while the two classrooms remained at Nish-na-be-anong. The office on Nish-na-be-anong was used to house the newly established Learning Resource Center until it too moved to the Tribal Operations building. In October of 2000, SCTC moved to a leased building one mile from the Tribal Operations building and other tribal buildings.

PROJECT FOCUS, PURPOSE, AND SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of the project focuses on the creation of an SCTC Student Support Services Program Assessment guide. SCTC is committed to a systematic program review process for evaluating and improving student services programs. The process for review will be conducted through program self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and student surveys with an emphasis on assessing quality, student experience, and student satisfaction within services provided. The comprehensive analysis, provided by the review, will be used to stimulate programmatic changes and inform the program planning and budgeting processes at various levels. The full program review cycle will be completed over a four-year period.

Program review is a required element for continuous improvement to ensure the college is meeting the needs of their students. SCTC's Student Services Program Review guide will be an important source of feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the specific service under review. The information provided will serve as a constructive base for continuous improvement. The Student Services Program Review will:

- Provide valuable input to SCTC's leadership regarding institutional-wide priority setting,
- Stimulate planning and encourage strategic development, and
- Chart progress and seek change to improve student success.

The process is intended to be meaningful, foremost, for the department and its enhancement of the student experience, student satisfaction, and student success. The review for each identified student services office will be completed as part of a four-year cycle. Three guiding principles will be embedded throughout the process to ensure that the data collected will be useful to improving student support.

The first element, tracking student usage and evaluation, will capture the student's sense of satisfaction with the area under review. Program usage and satisfaction data certainly do not tell the whole story, but, especially when the data is disaggregated, it offers critical information regarding the services that students find useful and supportive during their experience on campus. This section is designed to capture the student voice and compare how the usage of the service relates to academic goals such as improved GPA and completion rates. The second element is the ongoing evaluation of what students learn through their participation in the identified processes. For many of the student services programs, evidence-based program review includes a review of program and student outcomes, evaluation of the methods employed to assess achievement of the outcomes, and the analysis and reflection on learning results. The third and last element is quality assurance, planning, and budgeting decisions based on evidence. The results of the program review are to be used for follow-up planning and budgeting at various decision-making levels.

The significance of this product will not only be captured to document changes made to support tribal college students but as to provide the evidence to the accrediting agency that the student services programs are making a difference. Program review is a required element of the Higher Learning Commission accreditation. While data provides the foundation for effective program review, assessment

of engagement, and other quality improvement strategies, the data must be turned into evidence and communicated to all stakeholders in the most beneficial formats which include data dashboards and data team meetings.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation includes five chapters and a reference list. The first chapter is an introduction to the subject of tribal colleges and the need to implement an assessment model for student services programs. It also includes the theory of student involvement with discussion about what the framework entails and the role that student involvement plays on student success. Chapter Two is a literature review defining student involvement, student services assessment models, the ability to measure student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness, and the importance of the role of TCUs in their communities. Chapter Three describes the approach and design of the product, located in Chapter Four, which includes a process and guide to begin assessment of student services programs at Saginaw Chippewa tribal college. The final chapter allows me to reflect on the research and process of creating such a product and provides final recommendations for implementation.

CONCLUSION

In the Native American community, it is important to be able to find common ground with our students and show community members that SCTC's Student Services Programs are honoring and respecting their culture. A majority of SCTC students are first-generation college students, and when they can establish connections with the college, their support network increases. As Student Support Services staff, we will utilize the guide to make connections between the road map to success and our student's culture. The connections we can make so students feel more comfortable with the process of pursuing their postsecondary education is always worth the effort it involves.

The community SCTC serves is a major stakeholder, and cultivating relationships with the community is essential for its success. As a tribal college, SCTC is in a unique situation when we talk about the community we serve; the community that surrounds us and the needs of the community are identified as a priority when the data is reviewed and decisions regarding the future of the institution is considered. SCTC makes a priority of serving Native American students who live on or near our local

reservation and building relationships with the tribal nation to develop strong and mutually beneficial connections. Weill (2009) states, “communities also benefit socially by forming partnerships with the colleges to resolve the complex issues involved in meeting the social and cultural needs of their citizens, often with the added benefit of access to grant funding” (p. 39). This supports exactly what SCTC is accomplishing as the institution moves to create a student-centered campus that serves the needs of their students and the surrounding community.

The community connections will not only enhance but empower student success. Student success is partly a consequence of students identifying and dismantling barriers to their ability to achieve their definition of success. Effective student support services programs help students identify those barriers and create a framework that allows students to strategize ways to help them be successful. Two of the most common barriers to student success are students arriving on campus underprepared for college level academic curricula and the difficulty of navigating the journey to success. Empowering student success depends on the willingness to meet students where they are by taking actions such as establishing clear expectations and supporting students so that they can fulfill those expectations (Tinto & Pusser, 2006). The development of a comprehensive assessment process and programs that address these areas of concern for students and simplify the process will lead to improved student success.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

A variety of information regarding community colleges across the nation suggests that community colleges were, and still are, established to be “a gateway to higher education for millions of Americans” (Mellow, 2000, p. 4). Community colleges develop mission statements that encourage and inspire millions of students the chance to pursue a postsecondary degree and to do so in an environment that supports them holistically. The mission of the college and how the leadership moves to deliver the mission is essential not only for the success of the college but for the success of each of their students.

In 1968, more than a century after the first American community college was opened, the first tribal college was founded by the Navajo Nation. The mission of the Navajo Community College was established in 1968 and made not only the educational goals of each of their Native American students a priority but doing so by immersing them in their own native language. Today, 36 additional tribally controlled colleges have joined this mission to provide a quality education immersed in the culture and language to the communities they serve. These tribal colleges are not only providing a quality education for their students but also helping students develop a “sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 49).

The need for community colleges to focus on their missions but to do so in a way that helps build the student is essential. “Student development theory to guide one’s actions and decisions as they relate to students and their experiences” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 30). Chickering and Reisser provided their readers with seven vectors to illustrate how a student’s development into a college setting can affect their emotional, social, physical, and intellectual well-being in a college environment, particularly when they are working to form their identity. Aligning Chickering and Reisser’s seven vectors with the seven grandfather teachings used by many tribal colleges as their identified values that support their mission, demonstrates that in advancing the college’s mission and supporting the students we serve holistically has and always will be the priority of those that are passionate about student success.

Available resources documenting the unique environment that tribal colleges provide for students and how they support Native students are limited. Wright and Head (1990) state:

The scholarly literature on tribal colleges, apart from institutional self-studies, consists of a mere handful of published articles, reports, and dissertations. Only a few studies, for example, have been conducted to assess the educational outcomes of tribal colleges; and only scant data exist on student attitudes, academic achievement, vocational, career, and personal development arising from the tribal college experience. (p. 29)

However, in a 1989 report, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Boyer, 1989) found that graduation, continued education, and employment rates (for tribal college students) are not well documented: "The need for sound research is urgent" (p. 87). In order to provide research that documents the unique student experience and the success resulting from such experiences is one of the main reasons this dissertation must be written and the guide that it produces must be implemented.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

At SCTC, the ability to measure student satisfaction for our Native American student population and document their experiences through their postsecondary educational journey is essential for the success of the college. In order to do so, SCTC has implemented a student success coach as part of the suite of support services students receive within their first semester on campus. During this process, the student success coach collects data related to the student's current academic and nonacademic concerns and tailors a plan to support their individual needs. The process allows students to define what their own success is and what supports would be needed to accomplish their success. For this process to support student needs and be effective, the process must focus on interacting with and increasing the student's involvement inside and outside of the classroom.

Astin (1999) describes the basic elements of the theory and what is meant by student involvement by stating,

Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience. Thus, a highly involved student is one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students. Conversely, a typical uninvolved student neglects studies, spends little time on campus, abstains from extracurricular activities, and has infrequent contact with faculty members or other students. (p. 518)

This definition of student involvement is similar to the definition defined by student services staff on SCTC's campus. Astin defines the student involvement theory as one that "encourages educators to

focus less on what they do and more on what the student does: how motivated the student is and how much time and energy the student devotes to the learning process” (p. 526).

The ability to utilize this theory to support the work of SCTC's student success coach is satisfying. The process engages students from the beginning of their journey, allows them to define their motivation and success, and allows for a specific plan to be developed that will support their academic and nonacademic needs. According to the Education Trust (2021), “Strong relationships between adults and students must include: expressing care, challenging growth, providing support, sharing power, and expanding possibilities” (p. 1). This is exactly what the process of student success coaching aims to do. One technique used to increase student involvement is to allow the success coach to utilize cultural teachings to connect the students to the process of developing a success plan.

It is important to use student development theory to guide one's actions and decisions as they relate to students and their experiences on our college campuses. Chickering and Reisser (1993) utilize seven vectors: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose and developing integrity. Chickering and Reisser provide a deep explanation of each of the vector and then conclude: “There is an acceptance of others having the right to their beliefs and opinions while at the same time evaluating one's own values and beliefs (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 123). Chickering and Reisser's introducing the vectors aligned with the seven grandfather teachings would be a great tool for the students of our institution; Table 1 shows this alignment.

Table 1. Alignment of Chickering's Vectors and the Seven Grandfather Teachings

CHICKERING'S VECTORS	7 GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS
1. Developing Competence	Courage
2. Managing Emotions	Humility
3. Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence	Love
4. Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships	Respect
5. Establishing Identity	Honesty
6. Developing Purpose	Truth
7. Developing Integrity	Wisdom

Students must understand that it takes great courage to develop the competence they need to become higher education students. Students will try and fail and try again, and that is the process developing that courage. A student's ability to manage their emotions throughout the process is an example of humility. Sometimes in order to be successful in both their social and academic environments, students must learn to manage their emotions, and the use of humility allows students to keep their emotions under control. The ability for a student to love themselves allows them to move toward interdependence, and the ability to show respect for people and processes allow mature interpersonal relationships to develop. As students move through this process, they establish identity by being honest with themselves. Once a student begins to develop their identity, they will use their truth to develop their purpose. They will be able to channel their family commitments and their strong interpersonal values to assist in setting goals and developing the purpose that is meant for their journey. Last, but certainly not least, when a person develops integrity, they attain wisdom. Integrity is humanizing values, social responsibility, congruence, and authenticity. One can apply integrity through wisdom. Since this process is crucial to the success of our students, the process must be assessed and evaluated on a regular basis so it develops alongside the ever-changing needs of our students and success can be celebrated.

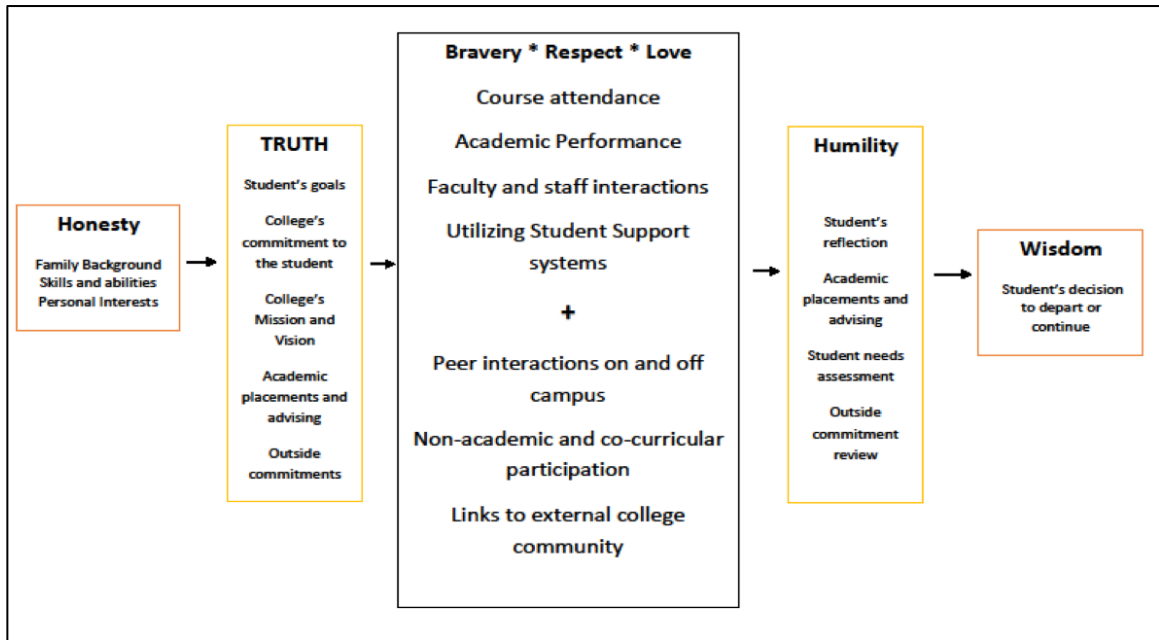
TINTO'S RETENTION MODEL

Tinto's retention model is the most commonly referred to as the model for student retention. According to Draper (2008), "it probably gains most support though because it immediately appeals to people's commonsense with its central notion of integration." Tinto's model captures how family background, skills, abilities, and prior schooling plays into the decisions that students make in regards to entering their postsecondary college career. The model moves through a system that shows the importance of students balancing academic related interactions with social interactions.

As the Dean of Students for a tribal college, it is extremely important to utilize our seven core values, also known as the seven grandfather teachings, as the values identified. The seven grandfather teachings are identified as the following: courage, humility, love, respect, honesty, truth, and wisdom. These values are known by our students, staff, faculty, and administrators and play an important role on campus that allows a connection to the Anishinaabe culture. The values are incorporated in all SCTC policies and processes to ensure that the students have a connection between their past, present, and future and are able to use the teachings to guide the way on their path to success.

The concept map (Figure 1) shows the support that students require to have a successful first year at college. The Student Services programs and processes make a huge impact on the student experience starting on day one. Students begin their journey in the admissions process by examining their honesty and acknowledging their family background and how their personal history plays into their decision to enter college. Once students identify the issues and/or supports in their past that have led them to the first day of college, they must then find their truth.

Figure 1: Concept Map



The Student Success Coach meets with the student and discusses student goals and how the SCTC’s mission can support their personal goals and their definition of success. The student then uses the teachings of bravery, respect, and love to work their way through the semester. They develop relationships with faculty and peers that help them become productive, responsible college students. Students use humility to reflect on their performance and then wisdom to make decisions for the next semester. These values are used through the student’s success planning process and establish the pathway needed to make a successful first year in college and a well-educated decision for what they should do next.

The Student Services model reflects Tinto’s model by allowing students to gain the support they need and reflect and relate their decisions and/or actions back to their lives and cultural teachings. The ability to gain support from the outside and learn to identify supports within themselves allows a student to become a well-rounded student. As we dig deeper into finding the supports within ourselves, I recommend using Chickering’s seven vectors of development and also a closer look at how they align with the seven grandfather teachings.

DEVELOPING THE PROCESS OF STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Research specific to tribal colleges does not extensively contribute to the literature that supports the need for student services program assessment. The process of assessing student learning, in general, has been a hot topic for postsecondary administrators for a number of years. In order to produce a Student Services Assessment Guide, which is supported by research and in the best interest of tribal college students, it is important to examine the past practices and adapt them to meet the needs of tribal college institutions and the students they serve.

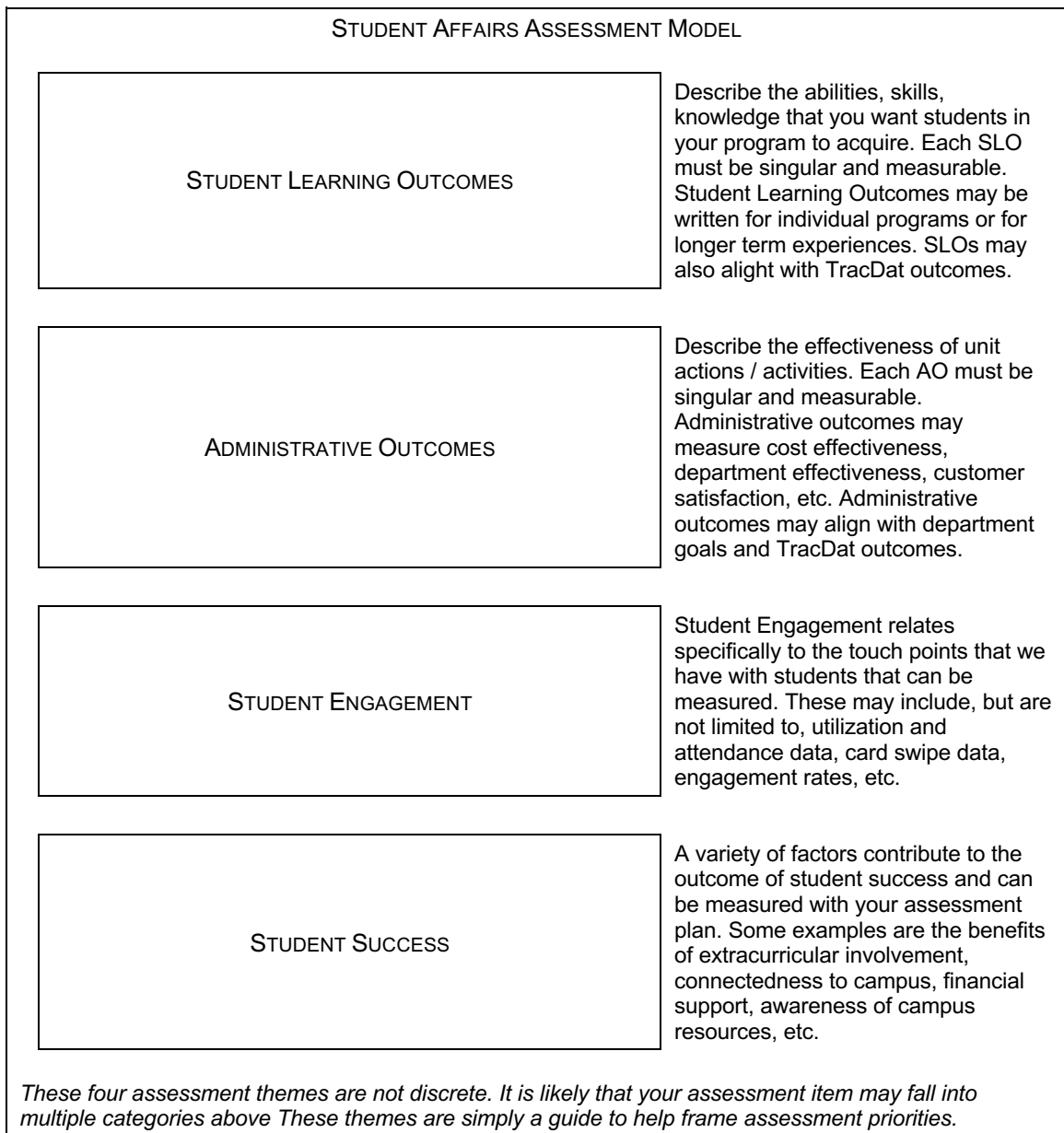
The basic components of an academic or nonacademic assessment guide must include the following:

- The Mission, vision and values of the institution that will be completing the assessment of the programs.
- The identity of the programs that are being assessed must be clearly identified. Each program identified by the student services department has a different impact on student development, therefore they must all be identified and addressed independently (Serban, 2004).
- The goals and learning objectives of each program must be clearly defined. The objectives must be measurable and focus on what the student will learn as they utilize the process.

As the research into student support services assessment explores these areas deeper and examines how they relate to overall student success, the priorities of student support services must be outlined, and the themes of the assessment must work together to measure the success of the student supports and the need for continual improvement.

The division of student support services at the University of Texas has created an assessment model that allows their student support services team to focus on four areas when assessing their programs. These areas include student learning outcomes, administrative outcomes, student engagement and student success. Figure 2 shows their process for student support services assessment and addresses the four areas with a detailed explanation.

Figure 2. University of North Texas Student Affairs Assessment Model



Source: University of North Texas (n.d.)

This model shows the importance of each section and how it relates to the college's process of student support services assessment. Although this system seems to thoroughly support the process of program assessment and collecting the data needed to make recommendations for institutional change, the process does not capture the student voice or how the programs are holistically supporting the student.

The guide in Chapter Four utilizes an assessment tool that was created to measure students learning as part of participating in the Student Services programs. It also captures how programs support our individual student's needs. The process includes the need for the results to be reviewed and analyzed leading to improved support services for tribal college students. The findings of this assessment will result in an action plan along with recommendations created by the program lead and will be discussed with the president's cabinet. Once approved, the action plan will result in addressing any deficiencies resulting from the assessment.

According to Karlberg (2010), "A carefully planned and well-supported assessment program can transform a tribal colleges environment toward learning that lasts, however, that transformation takes time and is influenced by the college's own culture" (p. 109). The tribal college is more likely to have a successful assessment program if it creates assessment processes that:

- are culturally appropriate and recognize and legitimize Indigenous knowledge and skills
- contribute to tribal self-determination and knowledge
- start with interested and supportive faculty and staff
- are faculty-driven (with assistance from the assessment coordinator)
- are streamlined and simplified so that instructor and staff time are used effectively
- include employees from appropriate segments of the college
- result in a respectful and reciprocal relationship between the assessment coordinator and staff
- build collaboration, relationships, and trust among staff through a consultative process
- initiate meaningful conversations
- are conducted in a responsible and ethical manner
- are useful, relevant, and meaningful to the tribal college community
- educate administration, staff, and faculty to improve their assessment skills
- report results internally in an ongoing way so that the information can be used to improve student success and learning (i.e., through meetings, reports, a website, e-mail)
- create a shared vision for the future of the tribal college, based on common values
- redirect resources towards priorities outlined in the mission and goals

- increase the college's responsiveness to the needs of the tribal community
- improve the instructional capacity of the tribal college as well as its public image
- provide the basis for college planning and budgeting decisions
- Demonstrate accountability and the responsible use of limited resources to the tribal community. (Karlberg, 2010)

The goal of the guide is to incorporate the above in an assessment process and measure tribal college student satisfaction. The data will document the experience of tribal college students at SCTC and is essential for the success of both our institution and the students who have made this their educational choice. Native students as a population are significant, and the satisfaction and development of Native students who attend tribal colleges is important to document. Student Services staff must ensure access and inclusion in their daily work to create an equitable environment for Native students. Thought this, we can provide an environment that welcomes, supports, and helps produce responsible, productive citizens in our tribal communities.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Upon review of additional literature surrounding measurements of student success, it was very apparent that measuring student satisfaction is one of the most important elements in evaluating current programs, determining student's expectations, and planning the design of future programs and services. Lawson et al. (2012) state, "organizations in the service sector have commonly dedicated their efforts to measuring and evaluating the satisfaction of their customers" (p. 7). This leads to the conclusion that the customers, our students, have an expectation, and it is our job to find the gap between that expectation and the reality of current services. This gap affects student satisfaction rates across many college campuses.

The measurement of student satisfaction is not easily done. However, there is recent development in the area of measuring customer satisfaction. The most popular tool, SERVQUAL, asks participants to reveal both their evaluations of services and their expectations before receiving the service. Additional tools such as SERVERF and HEdPERF have also been created to enhance the data

gathered by these types of evaluations. SERVERF allows participants the option to weigh the importance of their answers and HEdPERF was later developed for Higher Education purposes (Lawson et al., 2012).

As Danjuma & Rasli (2012) discuss, “universities have concerned themselves with the opinions and decisions of their students for a variety of reasons” (p. 6542). As enrollment numbers decrease across higher education institutions nationwide, the need to attract and retain students becomes more and more important. Allowing students to provide feedback about their experiences on-campus also affects the student’s sense of belonging. They tend to feel valued a member of the campus community when they see that their opinions have an effect how programs and services are offered and operated.

Lawson et al. (2012) identify the importance of providing feedback to students in various methods such as “formal and informal discussions with program/course representatives, module and program/course questionnaires, questionnaires that focus on specific services such as library or catering, and general questionnaires” (p. 7). Although some researchers have concerns regarding whether student satisfaction is an appropriate measure of the college’s success, when it is presented with qualitative research and institutional data, it is found to be a substantial piece of the equation for institutional success.

Overall, the importance of the ability for student support services offices to earn a high rating for student satisfaction will not only increase the success of the student but also move the institution in the right direction. Rudge (2014) states, “It is suggested that student support services collaborates with institutional research programs to procure data that will be useful in informing the decision making and planning process” (p. 13). This research is a part of the data collection process, and SCTC intends to use the data collected to make decisions that are best for our students.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

SCTC was fortunate to administer the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) survey to our students, first in 2018 and then again in 2019. This survey collected baseline data in student engagement on campus. The CCSSE survey measured scores in the areas of Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Support for Learners. Student effort is explained by CCSSE (2019) as “Students’ own behavior contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood that they will successfully attain their educational goals” (p. 3). The

survey provided SCTC data related to student effort, which was then reviewed and utilized by student services staff.

In SCTC's results from 2018, the student effort score was 55 based on a scoring scale created by CCSSE to measure the responses. This data seemed to align with the results of our IPEDs reporting which showed that time to completion was an issue our institution needed to examine. In 2019, the scores improved a bit with SCTC's score coming in at 57.6; however, the 2019 CCSSE cohort score had increased to 59.7. The results allowed administrators to celebrate the success but also keep the need to increase programming that supported student effort to remain a priority.

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

The importance of defining institutional strategy, its relationship with assessment, and learning how it is implemented is essential to the success of all administrators at postsecondary institutions. The process of strategic planning is a sure way to not only move your institution forward but also ensure that the goals and processes to achieve those goals are owned by all the stakeholders. Bryson (2018) states "leaders and managers of governments, public agencies of all sorts, non-profit organizations, and communities face numerous and difficult challenges" (p. 75). This couldn't be more true as we, higher education administrators, work to lead institutions and support our students through a pandemic. The need to develop and keep our strategic plans alive, even when dealing with unexpected situations, is essential. This is exactly what we expect our students to do, right? We expect them to rely on our academic and support services staff to help them continue their journey to success, especially when they are feeling defeated or confronting an issue that is so unexpected that it reflects a pandemic in their individual lives.

It is important to remember who we are serving and who our customers are as we work through this process. In a research study examining strategic planning across institutions in the UK, "it was found that nearly half of the institutions only implied a customer orientation in their planning. Of the rest, many merely paid lip service to the variety of publics they serve" (Conway et al., D., 1994, p. 35). SCTC supports students with an abundance of resources in not only how to thrive in their academic lives but also to ensure that students will have the tools to become future leaders. Assessing the effectiveness of these tools in the areas of student satisfaction and ensuring that the processes are aligning with the

strategic plan leads to proper institutional strategy. The strategic plan is not only a guide for the next five years but also serves as a project that allows leaders from all areas of the institution to work toward the mission of the college by utilizing the assessment of the programs and the student voice.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

The difference between the development and delivery of policies in mainstream institutions compared to SCTC has encouraged the development of an assessment process for student services programming. As a tribal college, the support services offered to students are unique and offered at a level that, due to their size, most mainstream institutions are unable to accommodate. The assessments provide a data bank that allow the college to see how effective their current services are for specific types of students. This allows services to be tailored to each specific subgroup of students as identified in the process, and data collected supports tailoring these services.

Rodriguez (2015) states “a lack of consensus and leadership on issues of equity and diversity has affected performance of underrepresented students as their outcomes remain largely unchanged for 3 decades” (p. 3). This statement supports the need to increase the data that is available to the leadership that is making these high-level decisions as they relate to the policies of the college. The data also provides a base or benchmark to reference in the event of change in leadership. Rodriguez (2015) states, “Presidents need to possess certain qualities, including a deep commitment to student access and success; a willingness to take significant risks to advance student success” (p. 4). This cannot be done without the appropriate assessment tool in place. The tool must not only assess the student experience but also allow collected data to be gathered to document the needs of their students.

Recently institutions have been challenged to adapt to different student needs as the result of a pandemic. Even though the events that caused the supports to change or be delivered different resulted urgently, the need to evaluate the process during a pandemic is still very necessary. Prywes and Sobel (2015) gave seven very specific steps in creating a crisis management team and managing that team through a crisis. They state, “many public universities must comply with state ‘open records’ laws, which entitle the public and media to have access to many types of government records” (p. 5).

This is another example of the difference between how mainstream institutions operate compared to our ability to operate. Since SCTC is under federal law, most state laws do not apply to our institution.

This allows SCTC to release data as we deem necessary and allows the institution to make adjustments to student supports on a timeline that is best for the student and allows the assessment of such process to not be influenced by state laws related to release to the media or other possibly damaging avenues.

It is important to remember how these outside influences affect our student and the process that allows us to identify barriers to student success. Student success is partly a consequence of dismantling the barriers that hinder our students from achieving their academic goals. Effective leaders are able to identify those barriers through a number of effective processes provided by both academic and nonacademic staff. The role of the institution to strategize ways to help students scale them, put a plan in place that allows that work to be done, evaluate the work, and make changes to the process as indicated by the data.

NURTURING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The community in which the institution serves is a major stakeholder in the results the assessment process produces. As a tribal college, SCTC is in a unique situation where the institution highlights the community they serve. SCTC's priority is to serve Native American students who live on or near our local reservation and build a relationship with the tribal nation that is strong and mutually beneficial. In addition, SCTC serves the surrounding community that includes another community college as well as a university. Weill (2009) states, "communities also benefit socially by forming partnerships with the colleges to resolve the complex issues involved in meeting the social and cultural needs of their citizens, often with the added benefit of access to grant funding" (p. 39). Identifying the needs of the small tribal community that surrounds the college assists in identifying the barriers that students who enter the institution may be facing.

For example, two common barriers to success are student under-preparedness and the difficulty of navigating the journey to credential attainment as first-generation college students. Developing programs that address student preparedness and implementing a program design like pathways, would simplify progression toward a credential or transfer enhances success (Juszkiewicz, 2014). Empowering student success is also related to instructors' preparedness and willingness to promote and support student learning by mentoring and utilizing best practices (Chickering & Gamson, 1989). Finally, empowering student success depends on the willingness to meet students where they are by taking

actions such as establishing clear expectations and supporting students so they can fulfill those expectations (Tinto & Pusser, 2006). Addressing the community's needs will directly assist the institution. In many instances, mainstream institutions have program requirements and expectations that are directly related to their funding based on performance indicators. One example for Michigan comes from the Michigan Community College Association.

The Michigan Community College Association (2022) recently proposed a funding model that includes elements similar to the current formula; however, it uses different metrics for performance indicators, changes the contact-hour metric by weighting health- and technology-contact hours, and changes percentage allocations to metrics, as discussed below.

- Base allocation for sustainability, 30.0%. This is a decrease from the current 50.0%. The model includes a baseline increase for each college that recognizes ongoing costs that each college incurs for operations.
- Performance/Completions, 30.0%. This component would replace the current weighted degree/completions metric that receives 17.5% of the current formula. Three distributions of 10.0% each would be made under this category:
- Performance Improvement. This component is based on improvement in six-year average rates of completion. The data source is the Governor's dashboard on completion rates. Completions include certificates, degrees, and transfers. This metric measures the college against itself. While the proposal envisions eventually using three cohorts, the MCCA model includes two (2007 and 2008). Colleges with improved rates receive a share of 20.0% of the funding allocated to this category; 80% of the amount allocated to this category is distributed to all 28 community colleges proportionately based on the prior-year appropriation for each college (across-the-board).
- Performance Completion Number. This metric rewards colleges for their proportionate share of completers relative to statewide completions. Each reported IPEDS completion counts as one (no weighting). Completions include certificates and degrees. The measure places an equal value on certificates and degrees because both have value in the labor market. The data source for this metric is IPEDS.
- Performance Completion Rate. This measures a college's performance relative to all 28 public community colleges using two cohorts (2007 and 2008) to smooth year-to year variances. The metric is based on six-year completion rates. The data source is Governor's dashboard on completion rates. Completions include certificates, degrees, and transfers. Colleges that are the farthest above the average get the largest increase from 20.0% of the funding allocated to this metric. Colleges at or below the statewide average completion rate get nothing from the 20.0% portion of funding allocated to this metric. However, all colleges receive a share of 80.0% of the funding allocated to this metric, based on the prior-year appropriation for each college (across-the-board).
- Contact Hour Completions, 30.0%. This is an increase from the current 10.0% allocation. This metric recognizes course enrollment, and the new weighting for health and technology programs recognizes higher costs for those programs. A weighting of 2x is given to health and technology programs.

- Administrative Efficiency, 5.0%. This is a decrease from the current 7.5% allocation. The methodology for the distribution remains the same as for the current funding model. Colleges with lower administrative costs (represented as a percentage of their operating expenditures) receive a larger portion of funding from this category.
- Local Strategic Value, 5.0%. This is a decrease from the current 15.0% allocation. The MCCA does not list any specific change to the current methodology for distributing funding under this category. However, the proposal does refer to the consideration of workforce placement data once they are available.

CHAPTER THREE: APPROACH AND DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains information on the elements that are included in the Student Services Assessment Guide, which was created for student services leaders as they explore the need for assessment in their programs. The Student Services Assessment Guide is a unique model to evaluate student responses to the core values of the Anishinaabe culture. According to a study regarding strengths and satisfaction in first-year undergraduate students, “half of college student attrition occurs in the first year of college, so identifying factors that contribute to student satisfaction is an important target” (Allan et al., 2021, p. 1). The inclusion of the students’ voice is essential for the assessment guide to create a complete picture of how effective the student services program is supporting students and assisting them along their path of success.

Although assessment is a priority at SCTC, a formal assessment of student services programs has not been included in the institution’s formal process of assessment. Until the implementation of the product (Chapter Four), the institution relied on the scores from students completing the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (2021) to capture the voice of students related to their experience on campus. According to their website,

Extensive research has identified good educational practices that are directly related to retention and other desired student outcomes. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) builds on this research and asks students about their college experiences — how they spend their time; what they feel they have gained from their classes; how they assess their relationships and interactions with faculty, counselors, and peers; what kinds of work they are challenged to do; how the college supports their learning; and so on. (CCSSE, 2021, p. 1)

The completion of this survey provided the college an overall score and compared how the institution relates to other colleges. Although the scores are helpful in showing whether students are “satisfied” with the services being provided, the scores do not give detailed information or data in regard to specific services, and therefore the institution is unable to utilize that data to capture the satisfaction of

students regarding specific processes and supports as they apply directly to SCTC's Student Services department.

BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

This assessment guide will be implemented at SCTC, a Tribal Community College located in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. The college is made up of approximately 150 students with an estimated 80% identified as Native American. The Student Services Department includes the Dean of Students, Admissions/ Registrar, Financial Aid, Student Billing, and Student Success. The Student Services Department provides all registered students with a variety of services that support their academic and nonacademic needs on and off campus.

In 2007, SCTC became an accredited higher education organization by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The criterion for institutions includes specific requirements for the student services programs within the college. For example, criterion 3.C. states: "The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services" and criterion 3.D. states: "The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching" (Higher Learning Commission, 2022, p. 1). As part of HLC's required comprehensive evaluation visits to the college in years 4 and 10, the college must respond to HLC through the submission of an assurance argument that provides evidence that the institution is meeting the requirements.

Although SCTC's student services programs have provided documented evidence that current supports are assisting students and providing both academic and nonacademic support in a variety of areas, the institution lacks a formal process to evaluate each office or service provided and the ability to document the enhancements made to each service after such review is completed.

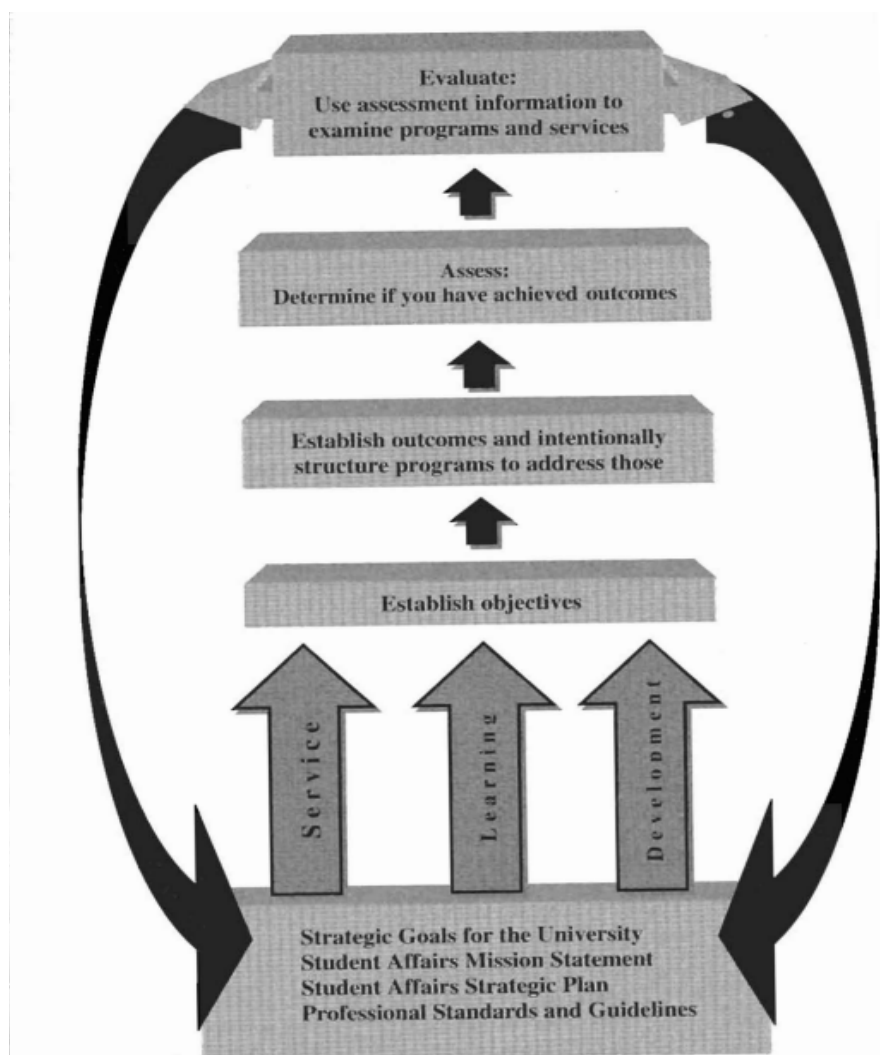
THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The need to assess student services programs and offices has become a priority in higher education. Assessment models designed to capture the information needed to make recommendations that lead to developing programs and processes aimed toward student success is essential for student services areas and to support the mission and vision of tribal college institutions. SCTC has declared its vision as being "committed to expanding educational opportunities in a nurturing environment that

embraces and integrates the cultural uniqueness of the Anishinaabek” (Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, 2022, p. 4). This vision calls for the need to implement the student services program assessment that provides the evidence in support of the vision statement.

Figure 3 is an example of a comprehensive assessment model for the division of student support services that aims to meet the comprehensive assessment needs of the student services program assessment process: “For assessment to be accurate and effective, it should be a continuous process” (Barham & Scott, 2006, p. 214).

Figure 3: Comprehensive Assessment Model for Student Support Services



Source: Barham & Scott, 2006, p. 214

The design of this model includes the some of the same characteristics that are outlined as priorities in the Student Services Assessment Guide (Chapter Four). However, the institution must begin with the development or review of the foundational information. For example, the current student services program lacks a well-defined mission statement. although each individual service office has an identified mission. Therefore, the process of capturing an overall mission for SCTC's student services programs must be part of the process.

Once SCTC is able to state a mission for the student services programs and implement the assessment guide as part of the institution's standard assessment processes, it will be critical to review both the mission and the process to ensure that they are meeting the needs of SCTC's students. In order to do so, the process must support not only the academic needs of the students but the nonacademic needs as well as discussed in parts of Chickering's development theory.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) state, "It is important to use student development theory to guide one's actions and decisions as they relate to students and their experiences on our college campuses" (p. 30). Chickering utilizes seven vectors in order to ensure that his theory captures a well-rounded picture of the process that the student undergoes during their stages of development. The seven vectors are:

- Developing competence
- Managing emotions
- Moving though autonomy toward interdependence
- Developing mature interpersonal relationships
- Establishing identity
- Developing purpose
- Developing integrity

The ability to measure a student's growth in these vectors, as part of their journey through college, is important in planning for their success. According to Barham and Scott (2006), "Assessing development may involve measuring student's emotional growth, interdependence, or identity development, all components of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory of psychosocial development" (p. 214). Using unique tools to capture the measurement of these areas and the process, in which the results

are delivered to the student and institution to enhance the services to the students, will provide the evidence needed to show that the institution is supporting students holistically.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) provide a deep explanation of each of the vectors and then conclude: "There is an acceptance of others having the right to their beliefs and opinions while at the same time evaluating one's own values and beliefs" (p. 123). This reasoning aligns directly with the purpose of student support services program assessment and the institution's values. The relationship between Chickering's vectors and how they relate to the seven grandfather teachings were shown in Table 1.

SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS

Students must understand that it takes great courage to develop the competence they need to become higher education students. Students will try and fail and try again, and that is part of the process of them developing that courage. A student's ability to manage their emotions throughout the educational process is an example of humility. Sometimes in order to be successful in both the social and academic worlds, a person must learn to manage their emotions, and the use of humility allows students to keep their emotions under control. The ability for a student to love themselves allows them to move toward interdependence, and the ability to show respect for people and processes allows mature interrelationships to develop.

As students move through this process, they establish identity by being honest with themselves. Once a student begins to develop their identity, they use their truth to develop their purpose. They are able to channel their family commitments and their strong interpersonal values to assist in setting goals and developing the purpose that is meant for their journey. Last, but certainly not least, when a person develops integrity, they attain wisdom. Integrity is humanizing values, social responsibility, congruence, and authenticity. A person can apply integrity through wisdom. Tying these vectors with the student experience and student voice allows for an all-inclusive view of the student students program.

The ability to utilize Chickering's seven vectors and relate them back to the seven grandfather teachings is a win-win situation for the development of an inclusive assessment process. The tools that are identified to assist the students use the seven grandfather teachings as the core values and will allow for data to individually identify where the student needs the most support in their individual development.

This information will be used by the institution to enhance holistic support services that are provided to students.

The continuous development and review of the holistic student supports provided by the institution is essential of student success. Holistic student supports are identified by Achieving the Dream (2022) as an

approach designed to provide all students with the type and intensity of support they need to identify and select the best pathway to achieve their educational and career goals. A holistic approach meets students where they are, addresses their individual needs, leverages their strengths, and focuses on student development and learning. (p. 7)

The product contained in Chapter Four will lead the institution in providing efficient and effective services to students that meet the definition of the holistic student approach.

COMPONENTS OF THE GUIDE

The Student Services Assessment Guide in Chapter 4 will be used by SCTC as a tool to assist student support services in assessing student services on the SCTC campus. The assessment guide will be used as a resource that will allow SCTC administrators to review the data and student voices, which will allow for data to be analyzed and strategized. The data will be used to make recommendations in order to improve support services provided by the institution while meeting the needs of the students. The Student Services Assessment Guide includes five parts:

- (I) Saginaw Chippewa tribal college Foundations
- (II) Student Services Program Review
- (III) Program Analysis
- (IV) Student Services Program Review Action Plan
- (V) Annual Report.

A brief description of each part, sections within each part, and the deliverables of each part are as follows:

1. **Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College Foundations** include the current mission, vision, and values of the College.

Vision: The Saginaw Chippewa tribal college is committed to expanding educational opportunities in a nurturing environment that embraces and integrates the cultural uniqueness of the Anishinaabek.

Mission: The Saginaw Chippewa tribal college is a tribally controlled land grant institution that reflects and promotes the unique culture of the Anishinaabek Community, designed with educational excellence to empower learners to reach their educational goals.

Values: In keeping with Anishinaabe culture and values, the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College strives to embody the Seven Grandfather Teachings of:

- **BRAVERY** ~ *AAKODEWIN*: Have the courage to do the right thing even in the most difficult of times.
- **HONESTY** ~ *GWEKOWAADIZIWIN*: Be truthful in actions and deeds.
- **HUMILITY** ~ *DIBAADENDIZOWIN*: Understand that all are equal; no one is more or less than another.
- **LOVE** ~ *ZAAGIDWIN*: Use your heart to help and share with your people.
- **RESPECT** ~ *MANAADJITOWAAWIN*: Demonstrate regard for all beings, creatures, and creation.
- **TRUTH** ~ *DEBWEWIN*: Be true in all you do; be true to yourself and to your people.
- **WISDOM** ~ *NIBWAAKAAWIN*: Use knowledge for the good of the people.

2. **Student Services Program Review:** The Student Services Program Review process is intended to be meaningful, foremost, for the student services department and its enhancement of the student experience, student satisfaction, and ultimately, student learning.

- The author provides the purpose of the Student Services Program Review process highlighting the institution's commitment to its students and providing evidence for continued HLC accreditation.
- The author includes three guiding principles that are embedded in the review guide and consistent with SCTC's standards:
 - Tracking student usage and evaluation
 - Ongoing evaluation of what students learn
 - Quality assurance, planning, and budgeting decisions based on evidence.
- The author provides the objectives of the Student Services Program Review process.
- The author provides the specific student services processes that will be assessed in each student services area.
- The author defines how the program review will ensure continued excellence of the student services programs.
- The author defines the elements of the process.
- The author identifies the steps of the assessment process.
- The author identifies the Student Services Program Review Team and responsibilities.

- The author defines the Student Services Program Review Cycle and Timetable.
3. **Program Analysis:** The Student Services Program Review process focuses on evaluation, planning, and improvement to better serve SCTC students. This program review process provides SCTC with a framework within which to review, evaluate, and formulate goals for each student services area. The process is an important component of institutional evaluation, planning, and resource allocation; therefore, the dialogue, constructive participation, and cooperation of all members of the faculty, staff, and administration is expected.
- The author identifies a model to illustrate the student services assessment process.
 - The author defines goals of each student services office.
 - A chart including the objective, strategy, target action, and results is created for each named service area.
 - The author includes a services description of
 - The role of the office,
 - Demographics of office staff, and
 - Program expenditures.
 - The author defines how each student services component will be evaluated.
 - Service usage and evaluation
 - Student relations
 - Meaning, Quality, and Integrity
 - Institutional Support
 - Obstacles/Previous findings
 - Other
4. **Student Services Program Review Action Plan:** The Student Services Program Action plan should synthesize the findings of the Student Services Program Review and develop an action plan based on its findings.
- The Author describes the specific parts of the action plan that include the following:
 - Recommendations
 - Tasks
 - Goals and objectives
 - Resources.

5. Annual Program Reporting: In order to assist in the four-year span of the Student Services Program Review process, the Office or Program lead of each program will complete an annual report. The annual report is due to the Dean of Students on the last day of June of each academic year.
 - The author defines the requirement for annual reporting by all offices that are not currently under review.

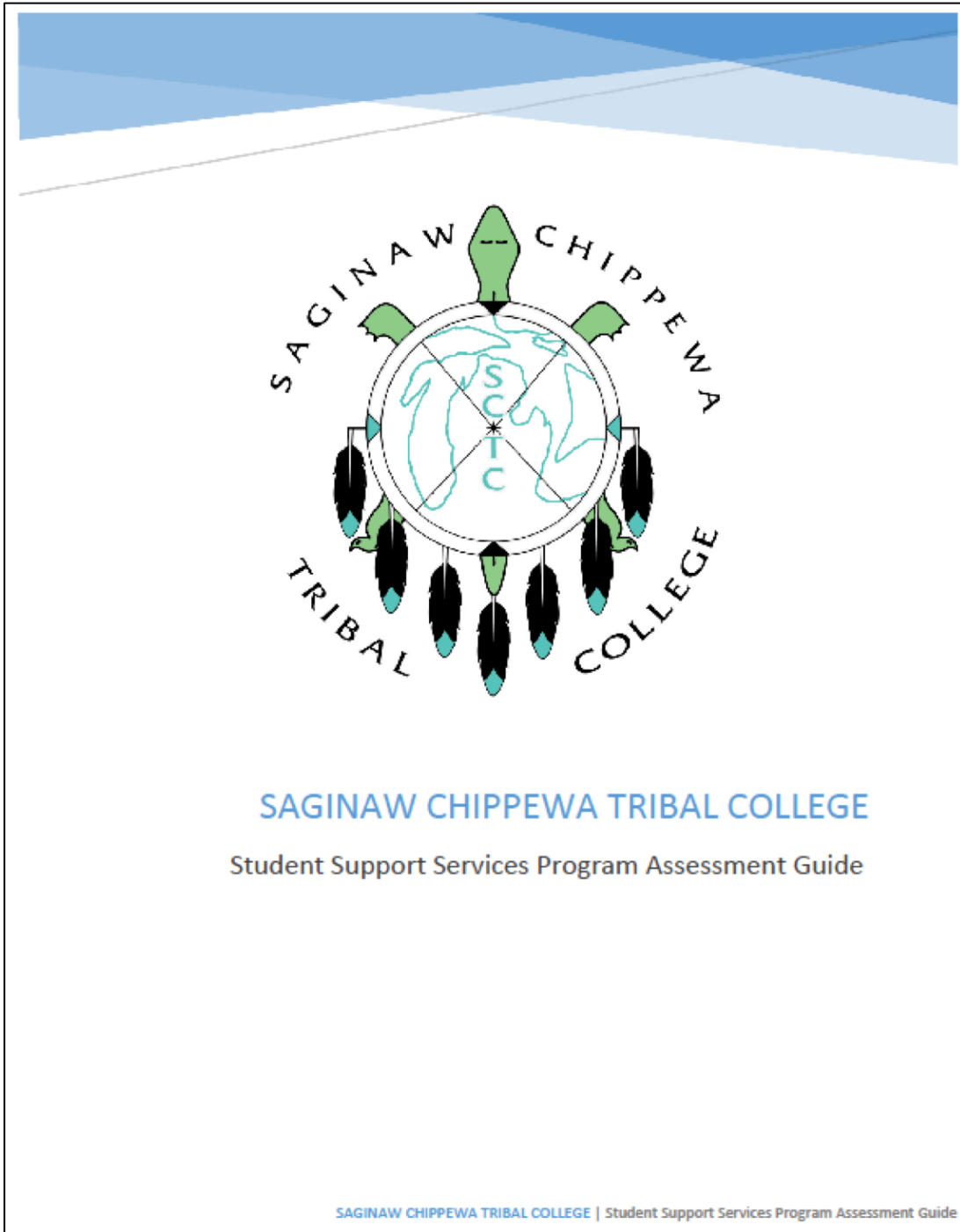
CONCLUSION

The ability to assess student services programs, while capturing the student voice, has become an important priority on many college campuses. However, the method of and process to capture and report the findings accurately is still a struggle at many institutions. In many cases, the data to provide evidence that the student services programs support students effectively and efficiently must come directly from the student's voice and cannot be determined by academic related data such as student grades.

The structure and design of the Student Services Assessment Guide in Chapter Four provides a systematized approach that offers a process that SCTC will implement as assessing student services programs begins. The Student Services Assessment Guide includes the elements to consider from the student services program objectives through actively applying an action plan to the college's assessment efforts. Any suggestions included in the action plan are not intended to be comprehensive, but to provide guidance and an implementation framework based on student feedback, best practices, and data collected through the assessment.

The Student Services Assessment Guide will serve as a tool for tribal and community colleges as they work toward creating a model of excellence in the services that are provided to all students. The guide offers flexibility in adapting the guide to their specific programming, goals, and/or objectives as needed. Chapter 4 includes the guide and is followed by Chapter 5, which includes a discussion on how to use of the guide and future implementation processes.

CHAPTER FOUR: STUDENT SERVICES ASSESSMENT GUIDE



SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBAL COLLEGE

Student Support Services Program Assessment Guide

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PART I: SAGINAW CHIPPEWA TRIBAL COLLEGE FOUNDATIONS

VISION | *The Saginaw Chippewa tribal college is committed to expanding educational opportunities in a nurturing environment that embraces and integrates the cultural uniqueness of the Anishinaabek.*

MISSION | *The Saginaw Chippewa tribal college is a tribally controlled land grant institution that reflects and promotes the unique culture of the Anishinaabek Community, designed with educational excellence to empower learners to reach their educational goals.*

VALUES | In keeping with Anishinaabe culture and values, the Saginaw Chippewa tribal college strives to embody the Seven Grandfather Teachings of:



BRAVERY ~ *AAKODEWIN*: Have the courage to do the right thing even in the most difficult of times



HONESTY ~ *GWEKOWAADIZIWIN*: Be truthful in actions and deeds



HUMILITY ~ *DIBAADENDIZOWIN*: Understand that all are equal; no one is more or less than another



LOVE ~ *ZAAGIDWIN*: Use your heart to help and share with your people



RESPECT ~ *MANAADJITOWAAWIN*: Demonstrate regard for all beings, creatures, and creation



TRUTH ~ *DEBWEWIN*: Be true in all you do; be true to yourself and to your people



WISDOM ~ *NIBWAAKAAWIN*: Use knowledge for the good of the people.




PART II: STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW

PURPOSE |

The Saginaw Chippewa tribal college (SCTC) is committed to a systematic program review process for evaluating and improving student services programs. The process is conducted through self-evaluation, peer evaluation survey and student evaluation, with an emphasis on assessing quality, degree of the student experience and student satisfaction within the services provided. The comprehensive analysis, which the review provides, is used to stimulate programmatic changes and inform planning and budgeting processing at various levels. The program review cycle occurs every four years.

Program review is a required element in Higher Learning Commission accreditation. While data provides the foundation for effective program review, assessment of student engagement, and other quality improvement strategies, the data must be turned into evidence and communicated in beneficial formats.

SCTC's Student Services Program Review is an important source of feedback about strengths and weaknesses of the specific service under review. The information provided in a review will serve as a constructive base for continuous improvement. The Student Services Program Review will:

-  Provide valuable input to SCTC's leadership regarding institutional-wide priority setting
-  Stimulate planning and encourage strategic development
-  Chart progress and seek change.

The process is intended to be meaningful, foremost, for the department and its enhancement of the student experience, student satisfaction, and ultimately, student learning.

Three guiding principles are embedded in this review guide and consistent with SCTC's standards:

Tracking Student Usage and Evaluation:

For student services areas, usage and satisfaction data certainly do not tell the whole story, but, especially when disaggregated, offer critical information regarding what services students find useful and supportive in their educational experience. If student-related programs are going to improve, they must attend to the student voice. Further, comparing how service and/or usage relates to the other academic goals, such as student GPA and completion rates, is another critical evaluation piece.

Ongoing Evaluation of What Students Learn:

For many services, evidence-based program review includes a review of program outcomes, evaluation of the methods employed to assess achievement of the outcomes, and analysis and reflection on learning results.

Quality Assurance, Planning, and Budgeting Decisions Based on Evidence:

The results of the program review are to be used for follow-up planning and budgeting at various decision-making levels.

OBJECTIVES |

1. Examine the Student services Student Learning outcomes (SLOs) that have been framed by the department ascertaining that they remain as is or need to be reformulated.
2. Select assessment methods and/or instruments for gathering evidence to show whether the program has met the expected target.
3. Specify procedures for analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the data gathered in the assessment to the Dean of Research and the Dean of Students.
4. Determine how the results of this program review will be used in decision-making, planning, and program improvement.

PROCESS |

The Student Services Program Review process focuses on evaluation, planning, and improvement to better serve SCTC students. This program review process provides SCTC with a framework within which to review, evaluate, and formulate goals for each student services area. The process is an important component of institutional evaluation, planning, and resource allocation; therefore, the dialogue, constructive participation, and cooperation of all members of the faculty, staff, and administration is expected.

SCTC Student Services consists of four service areas, each responsible for specific processes. Each area will assess SLOs as defined by SCTC student services team.



Registrar/Admissions

- Drop/Add Process
- Withdraw Process



Financial Aid

- Student completion of financial aid application process
- Requirements for Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)



Student Advising

- Student completion of program guide
- Exploring transfer opportunities to four year institutions



Student Success Coaching

- Identifying one internal and external resource
- Developing inter and intra-personal skills

The Student Services Program Review process is designed to ensure the continued excellence of student services programs offered by SCTC. The review will:





Continue to provide quality services through student review, peer review and self-evaluation







Encourage systematic collection and review of SLOs








Ensure the program meets its stated mission and direction of the SCTC Strategic Plan

-  Identify and address concerns and challenges of the college and students
-  Continue to fulfill accreditation requirements.






Elements of the process include:

-  Student Services Staff Leadership
-  Support by the President of the College, Faculty, Deans, and Native American Studies Faculty (as cultural consultant)
-  Recommendations based on qualitative and quantitative data
-  Sharing and communication of the program review summary and action plan with others at the college.

The Student Services Program Review process will involve the following steps:

-  Identify team members for program review
-  Hold an initial team meeting to review purpose and process
-  Collect qualitative and quantitative data and other pertinent documents as identified in the initial team meeting
-  Review the data, reflecting on the purposes for program review
-  Present summary of program review data and conclusions to the Board of Regents.

THE STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM |

-  Office or Program Lead, typically the Administrative staff member of the office or program under review
-  The Dean of Academics, Dean of Research, Full-time Faculty or Academic Specialists, as appropriate may be appointed by the Dean of Students and/or President
-  Participation of adjunct faculty and /or part-time staff, as appropriate, may be requested by the Office or Program Lead in consultation with the Dean of Students and/or President
-  Staff from other areas as appropriate, may be appointed by the Office or Program Lead in consultation with the Dean of Students and/or President
-  Dean of Students and/or President, as appropriate, ex officio.

Responsibilities

Office or Program Lead: Gathers data and other information for Student Services Program Review, conducts all review meetings, drafts and edits reports, and meets deadlines for submission of final Student Services Program Review Report and Action Plan.

Student Services Review Team (Faculty, administration, staff): will review and provide data and other information to the Office or Program Lead, attend Student Services Program Review meetings, review assessment of Student Services Program Review Final Report and Action Plan.

Dean of Research: Provides assessment, enrollment and retention, tuition and fees revenue, and other pertinent data to the Office or Program Lead.

Dean of Students: Advises and assists Office or Program Lead in completion of the Student Services Program Review Final Report and Action Plan.

THE STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW CYCLE |

SCTC's Student Services Programs will adopt a four-year schedule of rotation for assessment. For current programs beginning Academic Year 20XX-20XX (Year 1), the following is the program review schedule.

Projected Four- and Five-Year Cycle per program (Beginning AY 20XX-20XX)

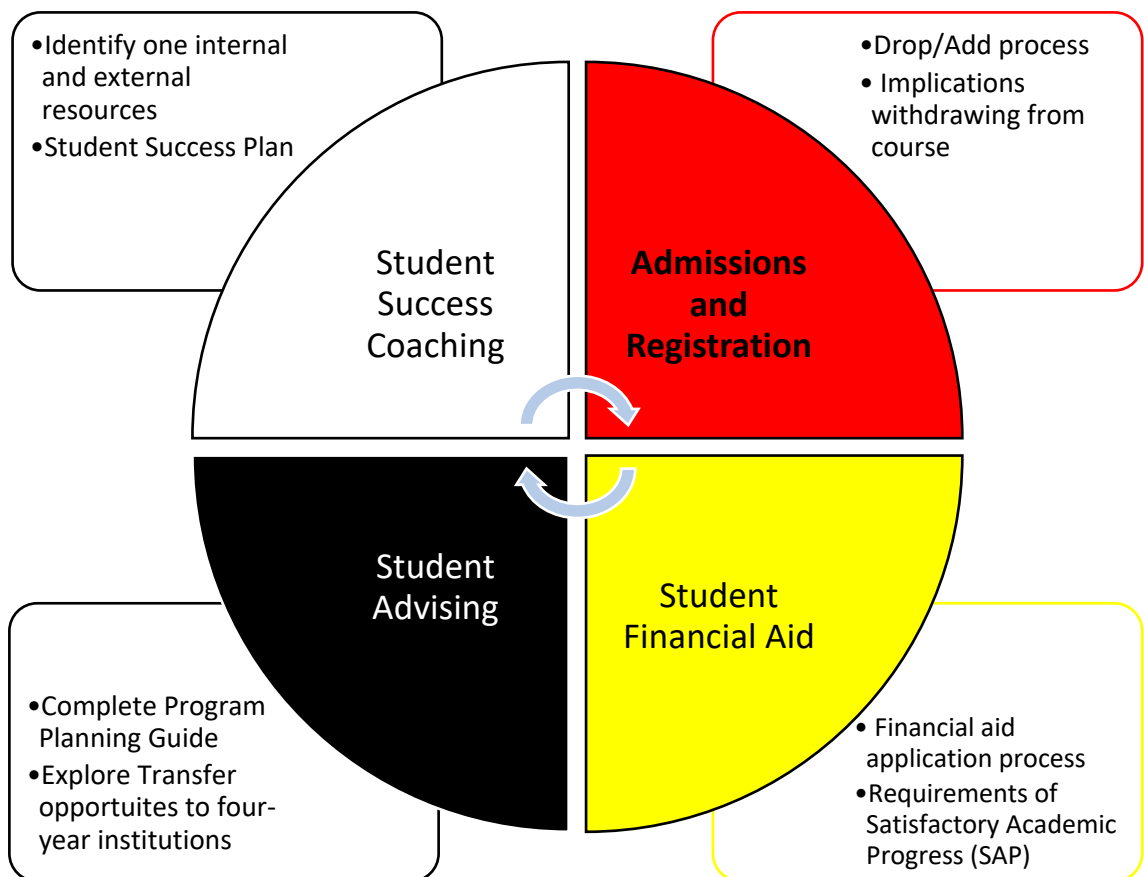
ACADEMIC YEAR	SERVICE UNDER REVIEW	SUGGESTED OFFICE OR PROGRAM LEAD
• Year 1	• Admissions/Registration Office	• Registrar
• Year 2	• Financial Aid Office	• Financial Aid Officer
• Year 3	• Student Advising	• Dean of Students
• Year 4	• Student Success Coaching	• Student Success Coach

Timetable

May	Office or Program Lead assigned by Dean of Students or President.
June	Dean of Research provides specific data from previous academic years to Office or Program Lead (if available).
August-December	Office or Program Lead calls meetings, gathers information, reflects on data, and writes draft of the components.
January-March	Office or Program Lead holds discussions with appropriate staff. Prepare Student Services Program Review report and Action Plan.
April	The President's Cabinet discusses Student Services Program review recommendations, Action Plan, and proposed changes to the program.
April - May	Student Services Program Review Final Report and Action Plan are finalized/approved and sent to Dean of Students and President's office. Action Plan assigned to Office or Program Lead to track follow-up items.

PART III: PROGRAM ANALYSIS

During the process of program analysis, it is essential to capture the student's voice regarding their experiences as they meet the student services learning outcomes and utilize the identified student services processes. The metrics provided are examples of commonly used student services processes. The final decision in regard to the processes assessed will be decided upon implementation of this guide.



Admissions and Registration Goals

Objective	Strategy	Target	Action or Recommendation	Results
Students will know the process of dropping/adding a class to their schedule	Administer student survey to PSY 100 course in fall '21 and spring '22 "What are the two ways students are able to process a drop/add request?"	60% of students will respond correctly to this survey question		
Students will know the consequences of withdrawing from a class after the drop date	Administer student survey to PSY 100 course in fall '21 and spring '22 "If you withdraw from a class instead of processing a drop, what will happen?"	60% of students will respond correctly to this survey question		

Student Financial Aid and Billing Goals

Objective	Strategy	Target	Action or Recommendation	Results
Students will know how to complete the financial aid application process	Administer student survey to PSY 100 course in fall '21 and spring '22 "What are the two financial aid applications all students should complete for the academic year?"	60% of students will respond correctly to this survey question		
Students will know the requirements of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)	Administer student survey to PSY 100 course in fall '21 and spring '22 "A "W" and "F" as a final grade will have the same effect on a student's GPA?"	60% of students will respond correctly to this survey question		

Student Advising Goals

Objective	Strategy	Target	Action or Recommendation	Results
Students will know how to access a program guide	Administer student survey to PSY 100 course in fall '21 and spring '22 "The program guide is located _____"	60% of students will respond correctly to this survey question		
Students will know how to explore transfer opportunities to four-year institutions	Administer student survey to PSY 100 course in fall '21 and spring '22 "What was the recommended resource discussed regarding transfer?"	60% of students will respond correctly to this survey question		

Student Success Coach Goals

Objective	Strategy	Target	Action or Recommendation	Results
Students will be able to identify one internal and one external resource	Administer student survey to PSY 100 course in fall '21 and spring '22 "Which of the following is an example of an internal and external resource?"	60% of students will respond correctly to this survey question		
Students will know who to contact to complete their student success plan	Administer student survey to PSY 100 course in fall '21 and spring '22 "Students will contact the following staff member to create a student success plan"	60% of students will respond correctly to this survey question		

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

1. ROLE OF THE OFFICE, OF WHICH PROCESS IS ASSIGNED, WITHIN SCTC:
 - a. Office Mission Statement
 - b. Services offered
 - c. History of the process under review, including a description of changes made since the last program review should be specifically addressed
2. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE OFFICE STAFF:
 - a. Office or Program Lead (Full-time & Part-time), degrees and credentials at the time of review
 - b. Current Program Staff (e.g., specialists, assistants, etc.)
 - c. Total student enrollment, at the end of week 3, per semester each year since the last review (beginning in AY 2021-2022)
3. PROGRAM EXPENDITURES (Since last APR)
 - a. List all annual program expenditures
 - b. If grant-funded, include travel, supplies, equipment, and other (as applicable)
 - c. Specify grants, additional funding, fundraising, etc.

SERVICES EVALUATION

1. SERVICE USAGE AND EVALUATION
 - a. How does the office make students aware of the services/process specified by the review?
 - b. How many students use each service? What are usage trends during the evaluation period?
 - c. Provide data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and other variables relevant to the office or program. How does this compare to SCTC data? Are the student groups underutilizing services? *Data will be reported in percentages only
 - d. How does the process obtain student feedback? Provide feedback/student evaluation data, disaggregated when possible.
 - e. Is there a demand for more or different services other than the services that office or program is currently able to provide?
 - f. Provide a reflective discussion on the usage and evaluation items above.
2. STUDENT RELATIONS
Describe Office or Program Lead's accessibility to students (e.g., office hours, voicemail and email, Schoology, etc.) and appropriateness of the office schedule designs that meet the needs of our students (availability and demand);
3. MEANING, QUALITY, AND INTEGRITY
SCTC asks offices and programs to define and ensure a distinctive and coherent educational experience for each of its offices and programs. This section will ask for quality and integrity to be examined in the following ways:
 - a. Explaining the quality of this program or service as evidenced by student feedback, evidence of student success, and benchmarking.

- b. Reflecting on data, disaggregated by major demonstrating how this service or program contributes to a student's degree (e.g., what percentage of business program students used this process?).
 - c. Commenting specifically on ways the process contributes to the distinctive, holistic experience of students at SCTC.
4. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT
- a. Does the process possess adequate facilities, equipment, and technology to maintain the effectiveness of its services?
 - b. Does SCTC support professional development activities that are adequate for staff members to maintain and upgrade their knowledge and skills in their discipline? Please explain.
5. OBSTACLES/PREVIOUS FINDINGS
- Describe any particularly difficult obstacles; either internal or external to SCTC, which influence the effectiveness of the process.
6. OTHER (IF APPLICABLE)
- a. Describe the process's contribution to other SCTC programs through its significant involvement with students, its support to other college programs through service offerings, or in other ways.
 - b. Describe any particularly successful aspects of the process as well as any honors, awards, and achievements earned by the program and/or its staff.
 - c. Describe co-curricular activities and involvement of the office or program staff.
 - d. Describe the program effectiveness, cost, value to the community, and viability.

PART IV: STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW ACTION PLAN

PROGRAM ACTION PLAN |

The Student Services Program Action plan should synthesize the findings of the Student Services Program Review and develop an action plan based on its findings.

1. RECOMMENDATION:

All Student Services Program Reviews completed, except those resulting in a recommendation to phase out a program, will result in specific recommendations that can improve the process and ensure that it more effectively and efficiently meets the needs of the students and Saginaw Chippewa tribal college's attainment of its goals. The President's cabinet will make one of the following recommendations:

- a. Maintain the process or program
- b. Enhance the process or program
- c. Reconfigure the process, service or program
- d. Reduce or phase-out the process, service, or program

2. TASKS:

- a. Explain how the process or program reflects, supports, and advances the mission and vision of the Saginaw Chippewa tribal college.
- b. Explain the changes and innovations that the process or program will undertake over the next five years to promote the mission and vision, identifying responsibility.
- c. Address how the process or program will improve or maintain student enrollment and program distinctiveness.

3. GOALS/OBJECTIVES

- a. Describe any new and revised goals and objectives for process or program improvement identified through this Student Services Program Review. Include both short-term (1 year or less) and long-term (5+ years).
- b. Describe how the program results will be communicated to the appropriate stakeholders.

4. RESOURCES

- a. Identify any additional resources needed to maintain and improve program quality and to reach the goals and objectives.

PART V: ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORTING

In order to assist in the four-year span of the Student Services Program Review process the Office or Program Lead of each program will complete an annual report. The annual report is due to the Dean of Students on the last day of June of each academic year.

THE ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT WILL INCLUDE:

1. Program's purpose
2. Number of students served, by semester
3. Narrative Summary for the academic year might include:
 - Changes within the discipline for services provided within the program
 - Changes within the student population served by the office or program
 - Changes within the educational, social, or economic sector served by the office or program
 - Changes within the organizational structure and direction of the college
 - Changes within SCTC
 - Changes in federal, state, or tribal laws and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) that have an effect on office or program functions.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONSIDERATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the key elements of the product provided in Chapter Four and discusses the value and contribution of this work to highlight the holistic supports at SCTC. It also reviews the limitations of the research conducted to create the assessment guide and proposes a process that could be easily implemented at any higher education institution. The action plan allows for the program guide to collect the data and sets an extra step in place that allows the institution to act on the data. A suggested area of future research includes a survey of the staff and faculty at SCTC to evaluate the same processes and/or student learning outcomes that are assessed by the student to allow for a process to ensure that the faculty, staff, and students are all familiar with the process and understand the importance of each one.

This dissertation is focused on creating a culture of assessment within the Student Services Department at SCTC. This process will be used to support creating a sense of belonging in students, staff, and faculty. Additionally, the formal assessment process creates a tool focused on student services assessment for tribal colleges. As the research has shown, tribal colleges are some of the least represented colleges in higher education research. The lack of resources often lead these institutions and their students to feel invisible within the data collection efforts and reporting used by local, state, and federal government agencies.

The process that tribal colleges utilize to connect and support their students are unlike mainstream institutions. Therefore, prospective support staff, faculty, and administration who are not familiar with the tribal college's unique and holistic processes need to have access to the resources that will assist in their preparation to serve at a tribal college.

SCTC is committed and determined to support their tribal community by providing an institution that not only strengthens the culture but assists in the growth of an accomplished workforce that committed to their community. SCTC is proud to provide open door access that allows students who may

not have decided to attend a postsecondary institution a chance to achieve their definition of academic success. Implementing an assessment method for the support services students receive on campus can only help the institution understand the struggles facing our students and adjust programs and staffing to adequately assist our students along their journey.

DEVELOPING STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES ASSESSMENT

The need to ensure that community college students receive quality support and are encouraged to make the connections to be successful is a key element to creating a productive society. In order to do so, student services programs must make assessment of their services a priority. According to Barham and Scott (2006), "Assessment is a clear link in demonstrating greater responsibility" (p. 211). The pressures of the student affairs assessment extend beyond the need to demonstrate the programs are supporting students academically; the programs must prove that they are capable of assisting students in all areas of their lives.

Upcraft and Schuh (1996) pointed toward the comprehensive nature of assessment as they outlined several reasons for its importance in student affairs. They contended that assessment is important to survival and demonstration of worth, to the quality of the programs, cost effectiveness, strategic planning and policy development, and accreditation.

Implementing a plan to assess our student services programs is important to me; it is critical in the efforts made toward helping students succeed. Creating a model and process in which student services programs will be assessed by all stakeholders is the primary reason for creating the guide in Chapter Four.

MOVING FORWARD

Supporting SCTC's students holistically should be a priority. In order to help students feel that the institution is focused on their success and institutional efforts are aimed at creating a supportive family environment, it is important to implement the student services assessment process. As SCTC implement an assessment process for student support services, the next step would be to review the data and use the results to adapt a student holistic approach that is best for tribal college students. Although scores on surveys, such as the CCSSE, provide positive remarks regarding student support, the information is not

documented in a way that is useful for making recommendations for program improvement. Therefore, exploring how this data will assist in creating a plan that addresses tribal college students holistically, provide data that will be beneficial as the college grows, and continue to make student support a top priority during strategic planning. The college will need to utilize the data to explore how the current services meet the needs of the community, workplaces, and students. While SCTC has worked for several years to provide the best support for the student body, linking services and goals with formal adoption of the student holistic approach has not been done. The goal, an institutional-wide assessment, would provide the data needed to officially adopt an approach that meets the needs of all tribal college students.

CONSIDERATIONS

The guide includes explanations of the components of the current student services program at SCTC. The framework includes incorporating the values of the seven grandfather teachings and illustrates how the programs address the students' needs in a holistic manner. I wrote the guide with the assumption that the reader's current experience in assessment is limited. The goal of the guide is to implement an inclusive assessment plan that focuses on enhancing student services programming to meet all academic and nonacademic needs of the students.

The target audience for the guide are student services professionals and tribal college leaders who are fully committed to supporting all students holistically. This guide may be useful to tribal colleges that do not currently assess student services programs. The recommendations in this guide may be tailored to meet the specific needs of all tribal college campuses and may lead to developing an action plan that would move the goals of the institution forward.

CHALLENGES

The primary focus of this dissertation was to create a systematic process to assess SCTC's student services programs. Some challenges found during the research include the limited amount of literature regarding tribal colleges and assessment processes specific to student services programs. Most of the research that does exist did not focus on the unique environment and student support processes that are specific to the tribal college environment.

An additional challenge when planning for the implementation of the assessment guide is that SCTC is a small college, and when the institution looks at the assessment of the program, it must be clear that the assessment is for the policies and procedures of that specific service and not the individual providing the service. There would have to be further discussion about how to handle the self-evaluation. It would be beneficial during the implementation process to bring the student services team together to discuss the entire process and highlight the self-evaluation piece.

Generating buy-in from student services staff could also prove to be a challenge. Several of the current staff may feel as SCTC already has an inclusive environment and provides holistic student services to all of our students. However, as the institution begins to make changes based on data, it is just as important for the growth of SCTC's student services programs to be able to provide the data to support the proposed changes.

The creation of the guide was a demanding task. The ability to create a guide that collects beneficial data, captures the student's voice, and allows the creation of an action plan that would suit the needs of the college, its students, and the stakeholders is something that will always be a work in progress.

CONCLUSION

As the Dean of Students of SCTC, my priority is to create the best environment for our students. The ability to listen to the challenges of the students has helped me realize that not all institutions understand the struggles of Native American students and even if they do, they don't take the time or put supports in place to support the student holistically. Providing our students with an environment that allows them to not be judged, regardless of their past, as they enter their higher education experience creates feelings of comfort and support for our students.

The motivation for the Student Services Assessment Guide is to serve as a resource for the SCTC Student Services Department as we develop and implement a formal assessment initiative. The action plan is designed to provide clear data-driven recommendations and offer strategies related to various aspects of the development of the student holistic approach. Aligning the results of the assessments with human and financial resources and professional development efforts, I would conclude that SCTC will officially adopt the student holistic approach and receive glowing reviews from student

surveys regarding their experience on campus. Implementation of this assessment plan is scheduled for the fall 2022 semester.

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