STUDENT SUCCESS TASK FORCE

PRE-CAMPUS READINESS SUBCOMMITTEE

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Introduction

The Pre-Campus Readiness group discussed how Southern is viewed by the community. Our goals were to enhance the ways we attract students and to prepare future students to better handle college level work. The discussions focused on ways to personalize and improve outreach to potential high school students, to influence their decision to select Southern and to help them prepare for college studies. We reviewed outreach and recruitment policies, admission policies, application processes, relationships with local schools and community colleges and ways to prepare students. Our group included both faculty and staff and we relied on our expertise and experiences as well as data to guide our discussions.

We have four recommendations or goals with several short examples that can be utilized to help achieve these goals and three recommendations with long term examples.

Recommendations/Short Term

Short Term Examples

1. **Strengthen outreach and recruitment efforts to first time and transfer students.**

Several members of our committee have college aged children. None of them received literature from SCSU or had their children contacted by SCSU in any way. We need to create incentives so that students can apply and to commit earlier. Use modern technology to share the positive message of SCSU to prospective students and their families. SCSU could recruit students with Higher SAT scores. The report presented at task force meeting showed that SCSU has the lowest SAT scores of the CSU’s. ([www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org) 2010). While SAT scores are not the only predictor of college success, significant correlations between SAT scores and success rates have been shown. (Appendix 1, page 1)

**Examples:**

a. Reach out to feeder high schools to get the names of students who are in 11th and 12th grade and are doing well, and send personal recruitment letters and invitations to activities on campus.

b. Personalize and target all potential students using, direct mail postcards and electronic communications such as email, Facebook and Twitter to convey University messages and options with a goal to have students feel more informed and recruited by Southern.

c. Foster stronger relationships with high school administrators and target high schools where students succeed at above average rates. (Appendix 1, page 4)
d. Modernize and simplify the SCSU online application, essay and recommendation process and accept applications via the Common Application. Students should be able to check their SCSU application status online. Advance the use of admissions software to expedite application handling and processing, including the implementation of a CRM system for communications, tracking and reporting on prospects, applicants and enrolling students.

e. Expand existing programs such as PACE and Bridges, that promote the strengths of SCSU.

f. Create incentives for high achieving students to attend (i.e. scholarships).

g. Create a team of students who can help to present workshops to HS students on the benefits of attending SCSU and tips on how to be better prepared for college.

h. Research traits that are common to students who succeed. Expand on the studies like Student Success Task Force and INQ 101 study (Appendix 1, pages 23-24 and Appendix 3).

2. **Improve and enhance the University image and present clear and consistent messages.**

SCSU needs to better promote our strengths and successes that are attractive to students and their families. Promote who we are more directly: quality and affordability that is a home away from home where students succeed.

**Examples:**

a. Have a regular plan to use student, faculty, and alumni voices to promote university messages and success stories and how Southern impacted their career paths.

b. Actively get positive student testimonials on recruitment websites like College Confidential.

c. Use branded promotional items that reinforce the messages that are given to students when they visit to help spread the brand and connect to us, like stickers or cups.

d. Promote the Cost Calculator on the web site as a tool to evaluate a student’s understanding of the full financial commitment required to complete undergraduate education.

http://www.southernct.edu/admissions/undergraduate/financial-aid/calculator

3. **Improve institutional Support for students in transition**

**Examples:**

a. Create Transfer student office. This would not only help existing students but help to enhance SCSU’s image.
b. Help faculty to understand and to assist student transitions to College academic
systems and requirements. Faculty should be reminded that some students are new
to SCSU or to college and they should receive at least a partial syllabus as hard copy
and that students may need time to learn the various computer systems they need
to succeed.

4. **Improve “new” student (Freshman/ Transfer) readiness.**

Students who place into Developmental English and/or Math have less of a chance of
succeeding at SCSU (Appendix 1, page 24). Transfer Student Report (Appendix 4, pages
5-7) site many problems with transferring credits. Several SCSU students have social
difficulties and health issues.

**Examples:**

a. Develop workshops, institutes and boot camps that help students prepare for the
work in college. Examples could include, Study skills, Test Taking, time Management,
Discipline Based preparation. (Foundations of nursing workshops or STEM
Exploration)

b. NSO/TSO should be revisited and assessed. Possible improvements include: Practice
reading several syllabi, Time management practice, learning the computer systems
at SCSU, especially BB and MySCSU

Anecdotal evidence from several professors has indicated that students struggle with the
varied computer systems on campus. Faculty should be reminded that students may be
overwhelmed by all they need to know.

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**Recommendations/Long Term**

1. **Strengthen outreach and recruitment efforts to first time and transfer students.**

   **Examples:**

   a. Increase scholarship money available to students, especially to students with high
   GPA's. Offer special tuition, fee waivers, etc. for student who do well academically

   b. Create incentives for out-of-state students to come to SCSU

   c. Create a campaign to "grow" our email list of prospects

   d. Look for evidence of “information literacy” skills via emerging high school
      information literacy assessment tools
2. **Improve and enhance the University image and present clear and consistent messages.**

   **Examples:**
   
   a. Provide workshops / boot camps for high school guidance counselors, teacher, librarians, and students from feeder schools to inform them regarding university expectations and high school courses that are most important to complete for prediction of higher education success.
   
   b. Hold “open-house” sessions for feeder schools to highlight resources that are available at the university for use by area schools, classes and individual students—library, art galleries, theater, athletic events, public spaces, etc.
   
   c. Develop a comprehensive, consistent and proactive communication plan to all constituencies in the admissions process (students, parents, counselors, teachers, coaches, etc.)

3. **Improve the University’s ability to identify and respond to the needs of students**

   **Examples:**
   
   a. Create in students a vision that they are on a pathway to college.
   
   b. When students are identified as having special needs, respond with intentional interventions and support.
   
   c. Design a day care program that students could use.

   d. Form focus groups made up of students (both Freshmen and Transfers) 2-3 weeks into their first semesters at SCSU and then follow up in subsequent years. Types of questions are included in Appendix 5. We think that getting students shortly after arriving will give better data.

**Appendices to be included:**

1. *Assessment and Planning Report for the Student Success Task Force*
2. INQ 101 Data Report
3. Transfer Student Task Force Report
4. Focus Group Questions