

## **Implementation of Mandatory Orientation (Removal of Holds)**

### **Overview**

Since 1996, Mt. San Antonio College has been both aggressive and progressive in ensuring that new students receive important and timely information related to their enrollment and success as a student at Mt. SAC through the development of **Mandatory New Student Orientation**. For 18 years, our faculty counselors, together with the administration and staff from other departments have been diligent in successfully enrolling students at Mt. SAC through coordinated services, including assessment and orientation. Since this time, the Counseling Department has provided New Student Orientations to an average of 13,000 students annually.

Since 2013, Mt. SAC's Student Services division has implemented electronic education plans for our students. To date, this totals over 28,000. In concert with SSSP requirements, when new students to Mt. SAC completed orientation they also received an abbreviated education plan – thus fulfilling two of the required core services of SSSP. Due to the imposition of mandatory prerequisites at Mt. SAC, the majority of students complete Assessment – fulfilling a third required core service of SSSP.

For summer term 2014, Mt. SAC implemented minor changes to enrollment priorities, based on the new Title 5 regulation, 58108. Since Mt. SAC already had a well-defined plan (AP 5055) for prioritized registration based on regulatory and statutory requirements as well as local priorities, already had an upper unit limit for priority registration, and since Mt. SAC was already tracking and providing interventions for students on probation, the implementation of 58108 was relatively easy. Additionally, because Mt. SAC already had a system in place for mandatory orientation, the implementation of SSSP goals was very simple. Mt. SAC was seen as a leader in the state for having already mastered the provision of new student orientations for all, non-exempt new students.

In July of 2014, out of concern that mandatory orientation may be impacting enrollment, a decision was made to remove the holds for orientation. In practice, this meant that all new students to Mt. SAC were no longer mandated to complete new student orientation. Even though mandatory orientation was being implemented at the vast majority of community colleges throughout the state, Mt. SAC reversed its course by removing the registration holds for students. Additionally, since new students were not completing orientation, they also did not complete an abbreviated education plan – accounting for a 30% funding loss per student (under the main aspect of the new funding formula for SSSP).

It was assumed that new students who completed the core services of assessment, orientation and an education plan (abbreviated) would receive a higher priority of registration appointment. Thus, there would be an incentive for students to complete all three core services. In reality, new students who completed the core services received only a 2 hour earlier appointment date. This is because of the fact that the implementation of enrollment priorities Title 5 58108 and AP 5055 resulted in 8 categories of students receiving prioritized registration appointments:

### **AP 5055 – Enrollment Priority**

Tier 1: By statute – Veterans, Foster Youth, DSPS, EOPS, CalWORKs

Tier 2: By Mt. SAC priority – student government, athletes, performance groups, Connect 4 students (Fall only), and non-credit students matriculating to credit including all ABE, ESL and VESL students

- Tier 3: Continuing students in good standing with less than 100 degree applicable units
- Tier 4: New students completing 3 core services of assessment, orientation, and education plan
- Tier 5: New students not completing the 3 core services and returning students completing less than 100 degree applicable units at Mt. SAC
- Tier 6: Continuing and returning students with more than 100 degree applicable units at Mt. SAC
- Tier 7: K-12 special admissions students
- Tier 8: Continuing and returning students not in good academic standing who have not completed good academic standing

### **Impact**

In such a large institution, it has been very difficult to reach out to the new students for Fall 2014, Winter 2015, and Spring 2015 who have not completed orientation. Additionally, since these students have not met with counselors in orientation, they are also unaware of the requirement to complete an education plan. Reports from counselors reflect students who are not enrolling in appropriate courses because they are unaware of what courses they should enroll in because they have not completed orientation and do not have an education plan.

Due to the change in the SSSP Funding Formula, there is growing concern that Mt. SAC will not maximize its full funding due to the lowered numbers of orientations and education plan.

### **State Requirement: Title 5 55520, 55531, 55530(b)**

Title 5 Section 55520 states: At a minimum, each community college district **shall provide** students, except as exempted with all of the following Students Success and Support Program services:

- (a) Orientation on a timely basis, pursuant to section 55521
- (b) Assessment for all nonexempt students
- (c) Counseling, advising, or other education planning services for all nonexempt students

Title 5 Section 55531 states: Colleges are **required to provide** nonexempt students with the services specified in 55520, 55521, 55522, 55523, and 55524. Initial implementation of these services is required for first time students identified in section 55530(b) **by the Fall 2015 term**. Beginning with the spring 2015 term, districts shall notify students of the requirements.

Title 5 Section 55530(b) states: Nonexempt first time students **shall**, within a reasonable period of time, be required to:

- (1) Identify a course of study
- (2) Be assessed to determine appropriate course placement
- (3) **Complete an orientation** activity provided by the college
- (4) Participation in counseling, advising or other planning service ... develop at a minimum, an abbreviated student education plan

### **Request**

The Student Services Team would like to request re-consideration of the removal of the holds on new student orientation to enable the reinstatement of mandatory orientation and to initiate mandatory assessment. Our collective belief is that assisting and preparing students to be successful is predicated upon their participation in New Student Orientation and the development of both an abbreviated and a

comprehensive education plan. We believe that the system that was previously in place was very successful and enabled us to provide our new students with information and resources to enable them to successfully launch their academic studies. The sentiment from faculty, staff and managers is that we are failing our students by not being able to provide them with critical services as they begin their college careers.

