

Executive Summary

Results of the Technical Assistance Review of Programs and Services for Students with Disabilities at Saddleback College

Review date: April 27-28, 2004

Report Content

This report details program review commendations, compliance issues and recommendations in each of three areas: Administration/Leadership, Program/Services, and Facilities/Physical Plant. The report also lists technical assistance provided to Saddleback College.

Results in Brief

Leadership/Administration Commendations

- Creation of an environment in which students with disabilities are embraced as an integral part of the campus.
- Special Services is a vital and visible component of the College community.
- College administrative support is demonstrated by funding of LD Specialist/Counselor position and the provision of VTEA funds.
- Collaborative efforts and reciprocal relationships exist with EOPS.
- Plan for consolidation of matriculation assessment and testing accommodations in a shared location.
- Students with disabilities receive service in the Counseling Center; Special Services counselors are able to concentrate on disability-related issues.
- Commitment to supporting and funding psychological services for students.
- College crisis intervention team and “Psych D Team” are collaborative efforts.
- The general counseling program meetings include EOPS and Special Services.
- College Web pages accessible and provides links to Special Services and offers handbooks on-line.
- Institutional research office providing excellent Special Services student data.

Program/Services Commendations

- The Special Services Director is very visible on campus and participates in campus governance.
- The Special Services Director is acknowledged as an advocate.
- Special Services efforts foster awareness of the service needs of students with disabilities throughout campus.



- Special Services program faculty and staff are professional and knowledgeable.
- Special Services conducts targeted outreach events for high school students.
- Recent relocation of the Alternate Media Specialist to the High Tech Center enhances service provision.
- Students were positive about the Special Services program staff and faculty.
- Excellent relationships with community resources.
- Accessible workstations are dispersed campus-wide.
- Successful grant writing efforts of the program have enhanced services.
- Adapted Physical Education (APE) program is well established and well-respected and provides a range of services.
- College has responded to a community need with provision of lip reading courses.
- Strategies classes develop student confidence to move into regular curriculum.
- Provision of faculty training regarding identification and instructional methodologies for students with learning disabilities.
- The Best Buddies program is a unique response to the needs of the DDL population.
- An “Ability Awareness” fair is held to educate faculty and students.

Facilities/Physical Plant Commendations

- Special Services offices are centrally located and integral to campus.
- The Special Services program distributes maps of access routes.
- Efforts to update accessibility by conversion to electric door openers.
- Signage indicating buildings and programs easily identifiable.
- Expertise of Special Services and students is utilized in accessibility projects.
- The APE facilities include an accessible pool with ramped entry as well as lift.

Leadership/Administration Compliance Issues

- Saddleback College does not have an approved policy and accompanying procedures for institutional compliance for Section 508.
- The College does not adhere to the closed captioning policy nor enforce the requirement that all new instructional videos purchased be closed captioned.

Program/Services Compliance Issues

- The random sample of student files reviewed had documentation that was inconsistent and/or lacking.
- Timely access to Special Services is impacted by a number of issues enumerated in the report and recommended issue resolutions.



Facilities/Physical Plant Compliance Issues

- A number of access issues were identified that should be addressed through ongoing attention to the ADA Transition Plan.
- HTC and testing accommodation facilities are not fully wheelchair accessible, due to travel routes and crowded space.

Leadership/Administration Recommendations

- Administration and Special Services Director need to enhance teamwork.
- Inclusion of the Special Services Director in regular management meetings.
- Address the lines of supervision for the Special Services program and re-evaluate roles and responsibilities for all Special Services positions.
- Create the most cost effective evening, weekend and summer program coverage.
- Have Alternate Media Specialist report directly to the Special Services Director.
- Alternate Media Specialist should provide training to faculty in on-line course development.
- Establish policy and procedures for campus/instructional departments to upgrade and maintain computer hardware and software licenses.
- Position Special Services descriptive information more prominently in College catalog and class schedule; enumerate specific types of alternate media available.
- Administration should encourage all faculty to include Alternate Media statements on course syllabi.

Program/Services Recommendations

- Revamp Special Services staff meetings or group activities to open lines of communication.
- The Special Services Director and staff need to work together to identify strategies for improving and streamlining processes and creating efficiencies.
- Review and revise new student application procedures, e.g. process flowchart.
- Expand hours to include evening and weekend hours to accommodate students.
- Ensure student file documentation is complete.
- Provide sufficient support and increase supervision of front desk, test proctoring areas and Alternate Media Specialist.
- Reevaluate office space of allocated to Alternate Media Specialist to adequately protect this costly equipment and sound proof surrounding office areas.
- Expand hours and services of High Tech Center and consider hiring a full-time HTC Specialist and/or reassigning Alternate Media Specialist to train students.
- The program should obtain closed caption decoders for all overhead projectors.



- Include the Alternate Media policy in the Special Services Handbook.
- Offer additional web accessibility training to faculty.
- Enhance responsiveness to prospective students with developmental disabilities and their families.
- Update faculty handbook for working with students with disabilities and make available on-line; foster participation and awareness of faculty training.
- Explore ways for APE program to become more integrated into PE department.
- Document efforts to address issues identified through this review.

Facilities/Physical Plant Recommendations

- General campus directional signage should be improved throughout the campus.
- Develop a tactile map of campus to facilitate independent travel for blind and visually-impaired students.
- Create a College accessibility committee to set priorities for addressing persistent access problems.
- Support the APE program with adequate facilities, storage and equipment.



Results of the Technical Assistance Review of Access, Programs and Services for Students with Disabilities at Saddleback College

Conducted by the Galvin Group, L.L.C., and Consultants from Selected California Community Colleges

April 27-28, 2004

Review Team Members

Ms. Bette McMuldren, The Galvin Group, Team Leader

Dr. Susan Osorio, Director Supportive Services, Monterey Peninsula College

Ms. Patti Flores-Charter, Learning Disabilities Specialist, Southwestern College

Mr. Scott James, Alternate Media Specialist, Santiago Canyon College

California Community Colleges operate under the auspices of California's legislative mandates, including Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. As noted in guidelines developed to facilitate regulatory compliance, "It is the responsibility of the colleges to establish programs, policies, and procedures which meet the requirements of . . . relevant statutes and regulations."¹ As such, this report is directed to the administration, faculty, and staff of Saddleback College who have responsibility for ensuring that Saddleback College is meeting requirements specified in Section 56052 of Title 5 with regard to program effectiveness, access requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, compliance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and compliance with the California Education Code.²

This report summarizes issues related to the Saddleback College efforts to ensure equal access to learning and related opportunities by students with disabilities. The report presents findings in three functional areas: A) Administration/Leadership; B) Programs/Services; and C) Facilities/Physical Plant. In each section, the report provides commendations, offers legal/regulatory compliance issues, suggests issue resolution strategies, and includes other recommendations designed to enhance Special Services operations. The report concludes with a list of the technical assistance provided to Saddleback College.

¹ Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges (1997). *Implementing Guidelines for Title 5 Regulations*, Introduction. Sacramento, CA: California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office.

² Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges (1997). *Implementing Guidelines for Title 5 Regulations*, Section 56052, Evaluation. Sacramento, CA: California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office.



Purposes of CCC Reviews

There are three purposes for conducting reviews of Community Colleges' compliance with laws and regulations regarding the rights of persons with disabilities and each College's efforts to ensure access to educational opportunities comparable to those provided other students. These purposes are:

- Provide formative information and technical assistance to the DSP&S Coordinator and staff for program improvement.
- Promote the exchange of ideas and experience among DSP&S programs from around the state.
- Comply with Title 5 section 56052, which requires evaluations of DSP&S programs to determine their effectiveness.

Overview of the Technical Assistance Review Process

Prior to the site visit on April 27-28, 2004, Randy Anderson, Special Services Director, provided team members with the some materials about the College. Once on campus, the Review Team met with Special Services staff of the College for an orientation to the review process. Personnel attending the orientation session included:

Lise Telson, Vice President for Student Services
Jerilyn Chuman, Dean, Counseling Services and Special Programs
Randy Anderson, Special Services Director
Zina Boratynec, DSP&S Counselor
Diane Crary, Learning Disabilities Specialist
Gail Hooper, Learning Disabilities Instructor
Loma Hopkins, DSP&S Counselor
Michelle Johnson, Learning Disabilities Assistant
Victor Manchik, Research Analyst
June Patterson, Project Specialist I
Anne Rocha, Senior Administrative Assistant
Amy Russell, Special Services Assistant
Marlene Sais, Administrative Assistant I
Mike Sauter, Alternate Media Specialist

Overview of Special Services Operations

The Special Services Program is an essential part of Saddleback College and students with disabilities are integral to the diversity of the student population. The Special Services Program is centrally located in the Student Services Center, which also houses many other student services, including the EOPS, Student Financial



Assistance, Counseling Services, Transfer Center, Health Center, College Bookstore, calWORKS Program and the Career Services Center. The High Tech Center for student with disabilities is located within the Special Services offices. The program provides both credit and non-credit classes, including an extensive array of adapted physical education classes. The Special Services program also offers classes through the Emeritus Institute of the College, with a focus toward lifelong learning for older adults. The Special Services program operations embody its mission of promoting personal growth and self-advocacy skills in the students with disabilities who receive services. Their goal is to assist students to realize their greatest potential and achieve richer and more productive lives.

The services offered through the Special Services Program include, but are not limited to:

- Academic, personal and vocational counseling
- Early registration
- Test-taking facilitation
- Mobility orientation and campus accessibility maps
- Notetaking
- Reader and transcription services
- Enlargement of printed materials
- Textbook recording
- Adapted computer labs
- Sign language interpreter services
- Liaison with faculty and community agencies



Students Served through the Special Services Program

Table 1 summarizes student counts in specific disability categories for the 2002-2003 academic year. Table 2 summarizes the current staffing arrangements for Special Services at Saddleback College.

TABLE 1: Students Served Through the Saddleback College DSP&S Program as Reported in 2002-2003 Student Count

Disability Categories	# of Students	Percent of Total
Learning Disability	1,110	44%
Acquired Brain Impairment	319	13%
Mobility Impairment	430	17%
Hearing Disability	260	10%
Speech Impairments	20	.8%
Psychological Disability	38	2%
Developmentally Delayed Learners	50	2%
Visual Disability	37	1.5%
Other Disabilities	230	9%
TOTALS	2,494	99.3%



TABLE 2: Current staffing patterns at Saddleback College as of April 2004

#	FTE	Position	Hours Week	Funding Source	
				DSP&S	Other
1	1.0	Special Services Director			
1	1.0	Counselor			
1	.25	Counselor			
1	1.0	Learning Disabilities Specialist			
2	.40	Learning Disabilities Instructor			
1	.83	Adapted Physical Education Specialist			
1	1.0	DSP&S Counselor			
1	.50	Program Assistant			
1	1.0	Learning Disabilities Assistant			
1	1.0	Counseling Office Assistant			
1	1.0	Senior Administrative Assistant			
1	1.0	Administrative Assistant I			
1	1.0	Alternate Media Specialist			
1	1.0	Special Services Assistant			
1	1.0	Special Services Assistant	0	Vacant position	
		Various temporary, hourly positions and associate faculty:			
		Audiologist-Instructor			
		Adapted PE Instructor			
		Associate Faculty			
		PFE Project Specialist			
		Project Specialist			

Introduction Summary

Saddleback College, established in 1968, is the largest member of the South Orange County Community College District. The College offers educational opportunities and support services to a diverse and growing population in southwestern Orange County. The aging buildings and campus walkways have created significant physical accessibility challenges, although much has been done to address these barriers and the process is ongoing.

Interviews with students receiving Special Services suggest that the services provided are of high quality and that students have the perception that Special Services fills an essential role in helping them pursue academic and related goals. In addition, it was clear from interviews with administrators, faculty, staff and others on campus that Special Services is held in high esteem and that the Director, faculty and staff are viewed as knowledgeable, competent, and a valuable asset to the College.

Administration/Leadership

General Observations

Saddleback College Special Services program is well positioned within Student Services and is supervised by an involved and supportive Dean. A new Vice President of Student Services oversees this vital component of the College community. An atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance of students with disabilities is promoted by the Administration.

Administration/Leadership Commendations

- Administration has created an environment in which students with disabilities are embraced as an integral part of the diversity of the campus.
- Knowledge and awareness of Special Services are evident across administrative levels.
- Special Services is a vital component of the College community.
- College administrative support is demonstrated by funding of LD Specialist/Counselor position and the provision of VTEA funds.
- Collaborative efforts and reciprocal relationships exist with EOPS.
- The plan for the consolidation of matriculation assessment and testing accommodations in a shared location is an excellent solution to budgetary constraints for both Matriculation and Special Services and a positive move toward the integration of students.



- Students with disabilities have been fully integrated in the Counseling Center’s service model, whereby Special Services counselors are able to concentrate on disability-related issues.
- There is a commitment to supporting and funding psychological services for students.
- The College’s crisis intervention team and the “Psych D Team” are examples of collaborative efforts designed to support and assist students in need.
- The general counseling program meets weekly and includes EOPS and Special Services counselors.
- College Web pages offer links to Special Services and the student handbook and Special Services Handbook on-line.
- Outstanding institutional research office providing excellent Special Services student data.

Administrative/Leadership Compliance Issues

1. Observation Supporting Issue Identification: Saddleback College does not have an approved policy and accompanying procedures for institutional compliance for Section 508. The College needs to have a clear plan for making College and program information available in alternate formats to students, current or future employees, members of the community, or other people served by the College who might require such accommodations, in a timely manner. In addition to accommodation requirements specified in Title 5, Section 67302,³ of the California Education Code requires that all suppliers of instructional materials such as textbooks to the University of California, California State University and California Community Colleges to provide materials with “. . . unencrypted electronic format of any printed instructional materials requested for use by a disabled student.”⁴

Issue Resolution Strategy(ies): The College should adopt a policy based on the two documents issued by the Chancellor’s Office. These are the Guidelines for Producing Instructional and Other Printed Materials in Alternate Media for Persons with Disabilities⁵ and Distance Education Access Guidelines for

³ California Education Code (1999). *Section 67302. Instructional Materials*. Sacramento, CA. California Community Colleges, Chancellor’s Office.

⁴ California Education Code (1999). *Section 67302. Instructional Materials*. Sacramento, CA. California Community Colleges, Chancellor’s Office.

⁵ Chancellor’s Office, California Community Colleges (2000). *Guidelines for Producing Instructional and Other Printed Materials in Alternate Media for Persons with Disabilities*. Sacramento, CA. California Community Colleges, Chancellor’s Office.



Students with Disabilities.⁶ All print materials developed through the College—including catalogs, schedules, policies and procedures—will be prepared with a copy in an unencrypted electronic format. For all documents produced for College-wide distribution, the electronically formatted document should be kept in a central location where it can be easily accessed if alternate formats are needed. For materials distributed on a more limited basis (e.g., class materials, departmental materials), the departmental administrator should maintain the electronic copy so that alternate format copies can be quickly produced when needed. As a part of this effort, the College should ensure that its policy statement appears on all public information distributed by the College advising of the availability of alternate media versions of these items. A College policy regarding alternate formats should be prepared and distributed in a timely fashion and followed by training for faculty, staff and administration to make all responsible parties aware of their obligations in this area.

2. Observation Supporting Issue Identification: The College has a policy relating to the purchase of new instructional videos and the requirement that these videos be closed captioned. However, the team observed that this policy is not enforced and faculty are continuing to purchase videos for classroom instructional purposes that are not accessible to hearing-impaired and deaf students requiring closed captioning. This creates a burden on the Alternate Media resources of the College to caption the videos in-house.

Issue Resolution Strategy: The College should adhere to the closed captioning policy and enforce the requirement that all new instructional videos purchased be closed captioned.

Administration/Leadership Recommendations

1. Observation Supporting Recommendation(s): In recent months, new Administrative oversight of the Special Services program has occurred. The Administration and the Director of Special Services appear to be out of alignment in their views of the program. Additionally, while regular management meetings occur in Student Services, the Special Services Director is not included due to his employment status as faculty. Further, the Special Services Director has oversight for the program and non-Special Services

⁶ Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges (August 1999). *Distance Education: Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities*. Sacramento, CA California Community Colleges, Chancellors' Office.



activities and programs involving administrative actions, yet is not in an administrative role.

Recommendation 1: Administration and Special Services Director need to work on development of clear lines of communication and an improved working relationship to provide unified guidance to faculty and staff within the program and the College.

Recommendation 2: Consider inclusion of the Special Services Director in regular management meetings to promote effective communication and collaboration.

Recommendation 3: Examine and evaluate the job description of the Special Services Director and lines of supervision within the program with consideration to a change of status of this position from faculty to administrative/management. Further, re-evaluate roles and responsibilities for all Special Services positions and make adjustments to ensure that the Director has clear responsibility for day-to-day operations. Consider modifying the authority of the Special Services Director to create a role that provides the authority needed to successfully carry out the responsibilities assigned. Existing demands on the Director to assure appropriate determination of eligibility, access, and accommodation for students, requires keeping abreast of recent OCR decisions, court precedents, developments in technology, etc. These duties in addition to the supervision of staff and being responsible for fulfilling reporting requirements and compliance with DSP&S regulations is a full time job, particularly on a campus the size of Saddleback.

2. Observation Supporting Recommendation: During interviews with students, concerns were raised about delays in accessing services and the lack of available services for evening and weekend classes and summer programs.

Recommendation: The College needs to address the provision of services during the summer, in the evenings and on the weekends. These additional evening and weekend hours will assist students who may not be on campus during the day. The College is encouraged to analyze the cost benefits of restructuring faculty and staff contracts to create a cost effective model for summer, weekend and evening coverage of program responsibilities.

3. Observation Supporting Recommendation(s): During interviews, significant confusion was expressed regarding the role and responsibilities of the Alternate Media Specialist.



Recommendation 1: Change the supervisory relationship of the Alternate Media Specialist to report directly to the Special Services Director and publicize this to faculty and staff. This reporting relationship will make the role and relationships with other technology personnel more clear. This position is to be used for campus-wide accessibility issues, including training faculty, working to make web pages accessible, response to alternate media requests and advisement on technology purchases. The Special Services Director is aware of budget considerations that may affect alternate media requests, as well as having relationships beyond the campus that can facilitate the training and most effective use of the Alternate Media Specialist position.

Recommendation 2: Develop a formalized process whereby the Alternate Media Specialist provides training to faculty in on-line course development and the use of accessibility tools of blackboard and other on-line distribution products.

Recommendation 3: Special Services Director should seek to better understand the Alternate Media Specialist roles and responsibilities, to ensure adequate supervision, such information is available through the High Tech Center Training Unit and the Alternate Text Production Center, both of which serve statewide concerns and are available for consultation with DSPS programs and their leaders.

4. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Technology labs throughout campus are not utilizing the most current versions of computer hardware and software. There is also a lack of consistency between labs which can hinder the work of students who need to be able to easily use any lab on campus.

Recommendation: Establish policy and procedures for the campus/instructional departments to upgrade and maintain computer hardware and software licenses and ensure that labs throughout campus are using the same systems.

5. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Special Services is appropriately positioned with Student Services and information describing services is found in the Student Services Section of the College Catalogue. However, there is no clear reference for students with disabilities in the table of contents or index. Similarly, in the Schedule of Classes, while there is a statement regarding alternate media of the inside cover, the availability of services for students with disabilities is not evident.



Recommendation: Special Services descriptive information should be more prominently placed in the College Catalog and Schedule of Classes, with cross referencing indicating that “Special Services” are directed to students with disabilities. Enumerate specific types of alternate media in the alternate media statement and ensure that these formats are readily available.

6. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Awareness and knowledge of services available through the Special Services office was reported in a faculty and staff survey conducted prior to the technical assistance review. While 68% of respondents considered the availability of information about programs and services for students with disabilities to be good or excellent, few are reported to include information to assist students on locating appropriate resources on their course syllabi.

Recommendation: Administration should strongly encourage all faculty to include alternate media statements on course syllabi, as well as information regarding Special Services for students with disabilities.

7. Observation Supporting Recommendation: The review team found significant confusion among faculty, staff and students regarding the appropriate role of the Alternate Media Specialist. This position was created through special funds provided by the Chancellor’s office with a clear vision of the needs of the community colleges.

Recommendation:

Program/Services

General Observations

The Special Services program at Saddleback College is an excellent resource to the College and is efficiently run, employing a stable, knowledgeable and dedicated staff. Those interviewed expressed admiration for and trust in the program and its contributions to the College. Students with disabilities expressed satisfaction with services and credited the general atmosphere of accommodation and cooperation to the work of the Special Services program. The Special Services Director has taken a leadership role in the Academic Senate and is well-known by faculty and staff.



The vast majority of students with disabilities are served at the campus, although off-campus courses are also provided to benefit special needs groups.

Program/Service Commendations

- The Special Services Director is very visible on campus.
- The Special Services Director is acknowledged as an essential and effective advocate, participating in pivotal campus governance and facilities committees.
- Special Services efforts foster awareness of the service needs of students with disabilities.
- The Special Services program faculty and staff are professional and knowledgeable, with expertise in addressing individual student needs.
- Special Services conducts targeted outreach events for high school students.
- Relocation of the Alternate Media Specialist to the High Tech Center was an appropriate move to enhance service provision to students learning to use the technology.
- The students interviewed and those who responded to the satisfaction survey were positive about the Special Services program staff and faculty.
- Excellent relationships with community resources, including Department of Rehabilitation were evident.
- Accessible workstations are dispersed campus-wide.
- Grant writing efforts of the program have been very successful and have enhanced services.
- Adapted Physical Education (APE) program is well established and well-respected, providing a range of services effectively to a diverse student population.
- The College has responded to a community need through provision of lip reading courses.
- Strategies classes develop student confidence to move into regular curriculum.
- Outreach and development workshops for faculty regarding identification and instructional methodologies for students with learning disabilities.
- The Best Buddies program is a unique response to the needs of the DDL population, and has developed an excellent brochure to publicize the program.
- An “Ability Awareness” fair is held with special activities to educate faculty and students.

Program/Services Compliance Issues



1. Observation Supporting Issue Identification: The random sample of student files reviewed had documentation that was inconsistent and/or lacking. Saddleback College Special Services program is in the process of a systematic review and appraisal of its entire record system, reviewing each of the student files to assure that each student's disability is verified, the disability impacts the student's education, the services provided are directly related to the educational functional limitation, and the documentation is clearly identified in SEC. Title 5, Section 56002 does require that students have a verified impairment which results in an educational limitation,⁷ and that they would benefit from the programs and services offered through the program. Further, in Section 56004, Title 5 states that the services and accommodations provided and identified in the SEC must be directly related to the educational limitation.⁸

Issue Resolution Strategy(ies): Special Services has undertaken a file review process and it must be completed with deficiencies corrected as soon as possible. The program then needs to ensure that faculty and staff are consistently reviewing disability documentation and are unfailingly gaining required signatures on applications and Student Educational Contracts. Saddleback may wish to consider adopting sample forms that conform to those available on the Chancellor's Office Website (<http://www.cccco.edu/>) or the Galvin Group Website (<http://www.galvin-group.com/>).

2. Observation Supporting Issue Identification: Timely access to Special Services is impacted by a number of issues, including the following:

Current procedures for scheduling LD assessments begin with a half-hour screening appointment by one staff member. Students may wait an excessive period of time for that appointment. Once screened, a different staff member schedules testing and tracks testing time from that point on. This system allows students to wait for lengthy and indefinite amounts of time to get an appointment for screening, then testing, etc.

The current high school transition program each spring involves prioritizing review of files and testing students for LD, who already have a history of disability, to the detriment of students who have been waiting. This procedure

⁷ Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges (1997). *Implementing Guidelines for Title 5 Regulations*. Section IIIA—56002 Student with a Disability. Sacramento, CA: California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office.

⁸ Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges (1997). *Implementing Guidelines for Title 5 Regulations*. Section IIIA—56004 Educational Limitation. Sacramento, CA: California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office.



offers unfair advantage to the high school transition students in opportunity and access to services.

Access to services is also hampered by the current “verification of disability” office procedure. Students do not sign a release of information until they have waited for the initial half-hour screening appointment. Special Services does not fax or mail for verification. The student must bring in the verification. Please note it appears this is true for all students except incoming high school students and Emeritus students.

Issue Resolution Strategy(ies): The Special Services Director and the program staff need to work together to identify strategies for improving and streamlining processes and creating efficiencies within the program. Special Services must address the issue of timely eligibility determination and service provision through careful examination of office procedures. The observations listed above exemplify the manner in which office procedures can add unnecessary delays to the eligibility process. Streamlining procedures will assist staff as well as students who are interested in accessing services. The program should also ensure that assistance to students is provided in a consistent and impartial manner.

Program/Services Recommendations

1. Observation Supporting Recommendation: While Special Services holds regular staff meetings, these meetings are reported to be non-productive, not enabling problem-solving, case management or departmental discussion.

Recommendation: The format of Special Services staff meetings or group activities need to be revamped to open lines of communication for all staff and provide an ongoing arena for information and discussion.

2. Observation Supporting Recommendation: As referenced in compliance issues, timeliness of services is a concern in the Special Services program. There appears to be confusion among staff as to procedures and the flow of eligibility decisions.

Recommendation: Pursue technical assistance to review and revise new student application procedures and develop a flowchart of the eligibility process. After development and consensus among faculty and staff, provide



training to ensure full understanding and utilization of the eligibility process and procedures developed.

3. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Saddleback College offers both day and evening classes for the benefit of the community it serves. Students with disabilities are a part of the campus population attending evening and weekend classes, though the Special Services office has limited availability during these times.

Recommendation: Research the number of students with disabilities taking evening or weekend classes. As accommodations must be provided whenever students with disabilities take courses, Special Services should shift appropriate resources according to the results of the research. Special Services is encouraged to expand hours to include evening and weekend hours to accommodate students who attend classes at these times. Options include staggering staff schedules, offering evening services by appointment, or holding regular evening hours. It is important for the Special Services office to be open during at least the first 30 minutes of evening classes to ensure that all students are receiving necessary accommodations.

4. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Regarding student files, the student history report includes a section on “reason codes and comments.” In the files selected for review, completion of this section was inconsistent and of marginal assistance to understanding the circumstances of the student in question.

Recommendation: Completion of student file documentation is strongly recommended, even when aspects of the requested information are not expressly required by Title 5. If this section of files is consistently completed and the manner in which it is completed is more descriptive, other service providers using the file will be more fully informed about the student and their needs and thereby more able to effectively serve their needs.

5. Observation Supporting Recommendation: During interviews, it was noted that supervisory oversight was insufficient in some areas of the program, including front desk reception, test proctoring and Alternate Media. Staff coverage of the front desk area may be unsatisfactory. Additionally, the program’s capacity for test proctoring is inadequate to meet the requests of faculty and students.

Recommendation: Provide sufficient support staff at the Special Services front



desk and test proctoring areas and increase supervision of these areas. Faculty need to be reassured that test proctoring is a shared concern and not their burden alone and that if testing is given by Special Services it is valid and secure. As addressed under Leadership, the Alternate Media Specialist position needs to be clearly defined and delineated and oversight of this position increased.

6. Observation Supporting Recommendation: The office space allocated to the Alternate Media Specialist position is also a matter of concern, as it consists of an open cubicle adjacent to the High Tech Center. The Alternate Media Specialist must work in consultation with faculty, staff and students in the use of complex technology. Because of the responsibilities associated with this role, delicate and expensive equipment is located in this cubicle, not to mention, this arrangement creates a noise hazard because the Braille embosser is currently located in the HTC.

Recommendation: To conduct the required level of specialized training to faculty, staff and students without distraction and interruption and to adequately protect costly equipment, it is recommended that the Alternate Media Specialist be provided a more secure, sound-proofed office space.

7. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Special Services staff and faculty expressed frustration in their attempts to obtain assistive technology services for students in need. The team noted that during their visit, there was limited activity and only two classes for students observed in the High Tech Center. Concern was raised by students and faculty that the High Tech Center is not staffed on a consistent basis. The program does not have a High Tech Specialist and while the lab is open to students during the day, only part-time assistance is available. The Alternate Media Specialist has not been available to work directly with students and, as stated previously in this report, there is a perception that this position is not being used effectively.

Recommendation: Incorporating a full-time HTC Specialist may not be a feasible solution from a budget standpoint for the program, although it is critical that a plan be developed for the operation of the HTC. The High Tech Center should consider expanding its hours of operation to the same hours that the Special Services office is open. The team recommends that Special Services consider hiring additional staff that can assist students and/or explore utilizing the Alternate Media Specialist in a capacity to work with and train students during part of his schedule. The team favors the hiring of a



certificated HTC Specialist since this individual will not only assist in the availability of services, but will also be highly qualified to support students in meeting the demands of advanced and improved assistive technology. Staff in the HTC should begin a program of classes for ABI, DDL and LD students. Regardless of the solution agreed upon, increased collaboration and communication is needed to develop an effective working relationship between the Alternate Media Specialist and Special Services faculty and to ensure technology solutions are made available to students in need.

8. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Saddleback College has audio-visual equipment available in classrooms, labs and meeting rooms. The equipment varies in age and sophistication and it appears that not all projectors are adapted to offer closed captioning if it would be required by a student or faculty member using campus facilities.

Recommendation: A survey of equipment should be undertaken to determine accessibility features available on equipment across campus. The program should then obtain closed caption decoders for all overhead projectors that lack this essential accessibility feature.

9. Observation Supporting Recommendation: An Alternate Media policy has been developed to guide the efforts of the Special Services program and Alternate Media Specialist in handling student and faculty requests. However, those interviewed conveyed minimal knowledge of the policy and its procedures. These procedures are critical to students' ability to obtain instructional materials in the proper format for their use.

Recommendation: To maximize distribution and understanding of the Alternate Media policy, it is recommended that it be included the Special Services Handbook.

10. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Web accessibility training is only provided to faculty who seek out knowledge on how to publish their own webpage. Team members found that not all faculty web pages were accessible.

Recommendation: The College's 508 policy should include a process for ensuring that all faculty web pages are accessible. The Chancellor's Office has recently published Distance Education Guidelines which can serve as a resource in this effort. Samples of other College's 508 policies can be provided as needed.



11. Observation Supporting Recommendation: The Special Services program has been approached by prospective students with developmental disabilities and their parents, requesting that courses/programs be designed and offered to serve their needs. The Special Services program has been unable to respond to these requests, due to staffing and budgetary constraints. Saddleback College has not traditionally provided services to individuals with developmental disabilities beyond the Best Buddies program.

Recommendation: Special Services is encouraged to work toward identification of local resources to enhance responsiveness to community constituents (e.g., persons with DD and their family members who are trying to develop relationships with the College). The program should utilize the expertise of the Advisory Committee and its vast network to identify creative solutions to serving this constituency.

12. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Special Services provides a guide for faculty in working with students with disabilities which is quite comprehensive, though somewhat outdated, having been written in 1993. The program is in the process of revising and updating this manual. The handbook will help to educate faculty/staff regarding Special Services eligibility requirements, rights and responsibilities, disabling conditions, services available through the Special Services program, types of accommodations offered, and advice on how to work with students and Special Services. Beyond offering this guide, the program has offered training to faculty on flex days and has experienced waning interest in recent years.

Recommendation(s): Because handbooks can be an excellent resource in helping College faculty and staff understand their responsibilities toward students with disabilities, the program is urged to complete and distribute the handbook that is being updated as soon as possible. This will build upon the rapport established with faculty and staff through other educational efforts and activities. Additionally, it is recommended that the program consider providing the handbook online to render it a “refresh-able” resource to faculty who have limited involvement with the College. Keeping adjunct faculty informed about policies, procedures, and requirements is a challenge faced by virtually all of the community colleges, and a multi-modal approach to this issue will undoubtedly prove most effective.

Because it is important to heighten awareness of all faculty regarding disability



issues and how to work effectively with students with disabilities, it is recommended that Special Services incorporate new and creative approaches to faculty training through departmental meetings, materials provided on a CD-ROM, demonstrations at the HTC, “brown bag” activities for faculty, and expanded promotion of flex opportunities. The Special Services program is encouraged to develop innovative topics to foster awareness, such as how to identify and work with students with specific disabilities, how to use a sign language interpreter, understanding hidden disabilities (e.g., psychiatric, ADHD, LD), understanding the relationship between disability and providing accommodations in the classroom, and how technology can assist students in realizing full access. Further, the College should consider professional development for non-Special Services faculty/staff through attendance at conferences and training events that address disability issues.

13. Observation Supporting Recommendation: The Adapted Physical Education program has been commended as an excellent resource for students with disabilities. The review team observed that this outstanding program is operating independently from the Physical Education department and is operating under the hardships of lack of dedicated space and accessibility of equipment and little support from the Physical Education department.

Recommendation: Explore ways for APE program to become more integrated into the Physical Education department regarding curriculum, scheduling and evaluation.

14. Observation Supporting Recommendation: This technical assistance review has generated a wide range of recommendations which can assist the Special Services program in continuing to improve its program and services. However, due to the intensity of day-to-day operations and the demands of offering quality services to students in need, it may become burdensome to set aside the time and energy to address issues raised in this report. Additionally, the future of program reviews through the Chancellor’s office is in question.

Recommendation: Document efforts to address issues identified through this review so that the next review does not reveal lack of attention to previously identified issues and the College receives the maximum benefit from the process it has undergone and the scrutiny under which the program has been observed.





Facilities/Physical Plant

General Observations

Saddleback College is situated on 200 acres of rolling hills in Mission Viejo in southern California. There are two main sections to the campus, aptly referred to as “upper” and “lower” campuses. Student Services is located on the upper campus, though classrooms, lecture halls, and labs are on both levels. There are abundant paths of travel throughout the campus, but due to the terrain and the age of the campus, many of these paths of egress are less than barrier-free. The College campus was built in 1968 and since that time, ongoing efforts have been made to create an accessible environment.

Facilities/Physical Plant Commendations

- The Special Services program distributes maps of access routes.
- Special Services offices are centrally located and integral to campus.
- Efforts have been made to update accessibility with regard to conversion to electric door openers on many buildings.
- Signage indicating buildings and programs is easily identifiable.
- The expertise of the Special Services Director and students has been utilized in the prioritization of accessibility projects.
- The APE facilities include an accessible pool with ramped entry as well as a lift.

Facilities/Physical Plant Compliance Issues

1. Observation Supporting Issue Identification: While there was an ADA Transition Plan for the College, it had been prepared quite some time ago, and it was clearly one that had not been updated in some time. During the campus tour and in subsequent travels around the campus, a number of access issues were identified that should be addressed through ongoing attention to the ADA Transition Plan. These included access problems in the following areas: Uniform directional signage and Braille signage was not always evident on campus, lack of automatic doors or small activation buttons on many automatic doors, cracked and irregular asphalt pathways.

Issue Resolution Strategy(ies): The College should continue efforts toward full ADA compliance as funding becomes available. Toward this goal, the ADA Transition Plan should continue to be utilized and required accessibility modifications done and as the list of prioritized projects is updated, include



timeframes for task completion. Signage for safe paths of travel, elevators, ramps, and other appropriate facilities needs to be upgraded. Brailled and/or tactile graphics should be added to each building. Requirements for the type and location of signage required under the ADA⁹ are very clear. Excellent resources are this endeavor would be the Checklist for Existing Facilities Version 2.1¹⁰ and the California Code of Regulations.

2. Observation Supporting Issue Identification: The High Tech Center is located in the Special Services office, but due to crowded space and narrow aisles between computer stations, it is not fully wheelchair accessible. Also, the access route to the testing accommodation facilities does not afford a wheelchair user an independent travel route. The “accessible” route to testing accommodation facilities goes through District offices and an emergency door which has to be opened manually for the student.

Issue Resolution Strategy(ies): There is a long range plan to remodel the library, adding an elevator to the area where testing accommodations are provided. This may be the ultimate answer to providing an accessible space for this service. This renovation may also include plans for improved space for the HTC. However, in the short term, it is critical that students needing to use these facilities have barrier-free travel routes and access once in the HTC. Immediate modifications to these spaces are required to come into compliance with 504 and Title II of the ADA which require colleges to provide program access to students with disabilities. Strategies for efficient and effective mobility of students to, from and within these programs on campus must remain a priority.

Facilities/Physical Plant Recommendations

1. Observation Supporting Recommendation: As observed in the compliance issues above with regard to general campus accessibility, signage is not compliant with the requirements of ADA. In addition to required signage to achieve accessibility, general directional signage to assist students and visitors in finding their way and locating buildings is essentially non-existent. Because of the distance between buildings and between the upper and lower campuses,

⁹ Adaptive Environments Center, Inc./Barrier Free Environments, Inc. (1995). *Checklist for Existing Facilities: Version 2.1* This document can be downloaded in either text or PDF formats from the U.S. Department of Justice website at <http://usdoj.gov/crt/ada/checkweb.htm>

¹⁰ Adaptive Environments Center, Inc./Barrier-Free Environments, Inc. (1995). Checklist for Existing Facilities 2.1.



it is incumbent upon the College to assist students and visitors in identifying the most efficient routes to their destinations.

Recommendation: Directional signage should be improved throughout the campus. Further, signage indicating accessible and inaccessible routes around the campus and the locations of Special Services offices would significantly enhance the visitability of the entire campus.

2. Observation Supporting Recommendation: Students with visual impairments are provided an individualized orientation to campus, but no resources exist to enable a student with a visual impairment to independently access the campus.

Recommendation: Development of a tactile map of campus to facilitate campus travel for blind and visually-impaired students.

3. Observation Supporting Recommendation: The College does not conduct regular accessibility walk-through tours to identify barriers and reevaluate priorities for barrier removal. Special Services also does not have a regularly scheduled review of campus accessibility.

Recommendation: Create a College accessibility committee and involve appropriate stakeholders, including representatives from Special Services in setting priorities for addressing persistent access problems. The accessibility committee should be invited to tour the campus periodically (e.g., twice yearly) to assess access to facilities and programs and to suggest ways of improving access. This method is an effective means to ensure that items that have been identified are successfully modified and that full accessibility is sustained as a College priority.

4. Observation Supporting Recommendation: The Adapted Physical Education program shares facilities with the fitness lab and must set up and then remove equipment and return it to storage after every class. This system places an extreme burden on the program staff.

Recommendation: The College is urged to recognize the importance of providing a dedicated and expanded space to house the APE program. As new construction is completed and programs are relocated, Special Services faculty, staff and students should be provided APE space that is adequate to house their equipment and conduct classes. The College is encouraged to invest in the APE program with adequate facilities, storage and equipment.



Technical Assistance

TA offered to Alternate Media Specialist, invitations to visit Santiago Canyon program to learn from experienced staff

Clarification of job duties of Alternate Media Specialist provided to program staff

Gave computer recommendations and specifications for upgrading the outdated High Tech Center's computer hardware and software.

Provision of specific web accessibility guidelines to faculty members and provided guidance on how they could find assistance on campus with their web pages, including the revised Distance Education Guidelines.

Extensive discussion and guidance provided regarding learning disabilities eligibility model and adaptation of program procedures to more efficiently serve students.



On October 7, 2003, Victoria P. Morrow, Executive Vice Chancellor, announced the Suspension of Categorical Program Site Visits for two fiscal years. This included the program reviews for DSP&S. In April, 2004, the Chancellor's Office announced that during the suspension of DSP&S Program Review Site Visits for two fiscal years, an interim procedure for technical assistance visits will be offered.

The announcement went on to delineate the process for these visits stating, "The technical assistance visits will entail one day visits to colleges by one representative of the program review contractor and possibly one peer from another college, depending on the technical assistance needs identified by the college. They will meet with the DSP&S Coordinator and any additional college staff chosen by the college. There will be no documents required to be previewed or available during the visit, however the college may ask to have documents or documentation reviewed by the visitors. No technical assistance report will be generated by the visit and sent to the college by the Chancellor's Office; however the college DSP&S Coordinator may request a copy of the 1-2 page report generated by the contractor to the Chancellor's Office used for purposes of documentation of contractor activities.

Saddleback College requested permission from the Chancellor's Office for a two-day technical assistance visit that would comprehensively detail any issues identified as a concern to the college and/or DSP&S program related to services for students with disabilities. As such, a team was assembled to visit the college and provide guidance on compliance issues and improvements to DSP&S services as well as highlight the excellent services currently being provided.

In accordance with the April 2004 memorandum to the field, a two-page synopsis of the issues will be forwarded to the Chancellor's Office. No comprehensive report is required under the current guidelines and as such, this report will not be reviewed by Chancellor's Office staff for accuracy and conformance to Chancellor's Office Title 5 Guidelines.

Therefore, this comprehensive report, generated by a team of peers from other California Community Colleges and an experienced team leader from the Galvin Group provides Saddleback with a framework for improvement of services while acknowledging the excellent comprehensive services, and the highly qualified and dedicated staff and administration. However, Saddleback College is not required to respond to the Chancellor's Office with descriptions of how they will address the issues identified in the report.