

## STANDARD THREE: STUDENTS

### Element 3.D - Student Services

The institution recruits and admits students qualified to complete its programs. It fosters a supportive learning environment and provides services to support students' achievement of their educational goals.

**Indicator:** Financial Aid Program: Effectiveness & Accountability

**3.D.6** The institution provides an effective program of financial aid consistent with its mission and goals, the needs of its students, and institutional resources. There is provision for institutional accountability for all financial aid awards.

#### Detailed Findings

#### Narrative summary of progress – or not – since last report

Both the 1995 Regular and Interim Reports contain reviews of the financial assistance area and notable changes have occurred since then. At that time, the Financial Aid Office consisted of 6 full-time and one half-time employees. According to the current Director, staff positions now consist of 6 professionals, 5 classified, 2 peer advisors, and 8-14 student assistants.

In 1995, the Financial Aid Office was entered through the counseling area and considered convenient but somewhat crowded and was scheduled to move into the LRC space in fall of that year. Today the Office is located in a large, open, and inviting space with its own entrance.

The financial aid programs offered by TMCC are discussed in detail in Indicator 3.D.7 and 3.D.8 which specifically address performance with regards to the various *categories* within the programs, their promotion to the potential and existing student population, and monitoring student *loan* recipients.

The 1995 report stated the following and all of these items are currently in operation:

- Controller's Office and FA Office collaborate on internal budget accounts including prompt provision of status reports
- Controller's Office and FA Office coordinate billings and disbursements
- Controller's Office is responsible for collections
- A&R and FA Office collaborate on monitoring academic progress of student aid recipients.

The College's student default rate is still well under the 20% established by the U.S. Dept of Education whereby the institution is required to implement reduction measures. In 1992, TMCC's rate was 9.5% and the latest figure from 2002 is 8/9%.

According to a Nov 20, 2003 chart of "Financial Aid Disbursed to Students" (Exhibit # ????) the comparison figures are as follows: **need to double check these numbers ??**

	<u>2003</u>	<u>1992</u>
Grants	\$3,889,936	\$1,200,000
Loans	\$3,308,461	\$1,714,512
Applied for aid	6,859	2,378
Received awards	4,898	1,087
Denied aid	500	186
*Unaccounted applicants	1,461	1,105
Scholarships	???	???

\*Unaccounted for applicants represent students who did not complete their files or did not attend TMCC.

Annual accountability reports are submitted to the Chancellor's Office. Every two years, the Federal Financial Aid programs are audited and the 1995 review indicates that a 1994 audit had been performed and some findings that were pointed out were going to be addressed. There were no audit findings in 2002 and 2003. Next results will be in December '04.

**Current Status:** Sources for information on financial assistance were found in the 03-04 Catalog (p 12), in Appendix D, on the Website, and in the Student Handbook (p 21) and data provided by the Director of Financial Aid. (Exhibits ## ???)

Although the student and the student's family have the primary responsibility for financing the costs of education, there is some aid available through TMCC for those families who cannot meet the total costs. This aid is available in the form of grants, loans, scholarships, student employment or a combination of these. These programs are regulated by federal (Title IV), state, and campus guidelines. Most of the financial aid guidelines specify eligibility requirements which are itemized on page 12 of the Catalog. Students who do not specifically meet any of the eligibility requirements may still be eligible for some types of aid and should see a financial aid officer to discuss their special circumstances.

The effectiveness of the college's financial aid program can be seen in the following policy and procedural elements that serve as markers for the institution's accountability [to the student, to the college, to the funders, and by the student).

**Progression Standards for Financial Aid Students** (*Catalog, Appendix D*) As a financial aid recipient, a student must meet a minimum grade point average of 2.0 and complete credit requirements in their enrollment category in order to maintain financial aid eligibility for the next semester. If a student has not used all of the Pell Grant during the academic year (fall and spring semesters), the grant may be used to enroll for summer session. These academic standards do not affect a student's eligibility to continue taking classes at TMCC without financial assistance.

**Time Limitation:** Students receiving federal financial aid are expected to complete their educational objectives within the prescribed length of time required by the specific program for which enrolled. Students whose total credits earned exceed 150% of the program requirements for the degree declared with the Admissions and Records office may not receive further financial aid. [Students with extenuating circumstances should contact a Financial Aid Professional to discuss their situation and submit an appeal, if appropriate. (rm added)]

**Academic Standards:** For purposes of meeting academic performance letter grades are awarded. The interpretation of these grades is found in the policy outlined in Appendix D of the Catalog.

**Probation, Suspension, Reinstatement** (*Catalog, Appendix D*) Students must have a cumulative campus GPA of 2.0 to be eligible for aid. Immediate financial aid suspension will occur whenever the cumulative GPA is less than 2.0. To re-establish financial aid eligibility after being suspended, a student must, without financial aid assistance, earn a 2.0 GPA. Details of consequences of a student either completing less than the credit load recognized in the financial aid award or placed on financial aid suspension are offered in the Catalog, Appendix D.

**Appeal Procedures:** If a student is placed on suspended status, the student may appeal. Details are available in Appendix M of the 03-04 catalog and on the Financial Aid Homepage on the website.

**Degree Requirements:** Financial aid students must declare a major and carefully review their courses and degree programs. Transfer-general, job upgrade, undeclared, and personal interest are not eligible degree programs for receiving financial aid. **Millennium scholarship is not a program of study---????, but students must declare a major to receive this funding – Scott???)**, The transfer general major should not be confused with the associate of arts transfer degree or the associate of general studies degree.” It is the responsibility of the student to order transcripts from institutions previously attended and must request a degree audit report [DARS, now DARWIN] from Admissions and Records in order to have their transcripts evaluated. **[Students are unaware that their transcripts “sit” in their A&R file until the student initiates an official request for evaluation; students assume that once TMCC receives the transcript(s), this evaluation is automatic.]**

**Refund Policy:** In accordance with federal guidelines and the Higher Education Act of 1999, TMCC returns monies to the original accounts. Those students failing to repay will be denied future awards and/or be reported to the U.S. Department of Education.

**Financial Aid Student Rights:** Students have an equal opportunity to receive financial aid. After making proper application, students are entitled to expect an equitable determination for eligibility of available funds. Each student’s application is individually reviewed using the same evaluation criteria. A separate list of student rights and responsibilities with regard to financial assistance are published in several places. (*Catalog p 13; TMCC Website*)

**Financial Aid Statement of Ethical Principals:** The Primary goal of the Financial Aid Professional is to help students achieve their educational potential by providing appropriate financial resources. To this end, this Statement provides the financial aid professional with a set of principles that serves as a common foundation for accepted standards of conduct. (*TMCC Website*)

**Financial Aid Student Evaluation Surveys ???? results of latest**

### Detailed Analysis

#### Strengths:

- 1) The default rate for student loan repayments at the College was 8.9% at TMCC in 2002 which is well below the rate established by the U.S. Department of Education which is 20%.
- 2) The Financial Aid Department tripled its disbursements to TMCC students over the ten-year period from 1992 to 2003 (from \$1,200,00 to \$3,308, 461).
- 3) TMCC students who do not meet eligibility requirement for financial assistance may still be eligible for some types of aid at the college.
- 4) All students’ applications for financial aid are reviewed following the same evaluation process, giving each student an equitable chance of receiving assistance.
- 5) Over 500scholarships were awarded to TMCC students for the 04-05 terms through the Foundation Office representing over \_\_\_\_\_????? donors and/or sponsors.

**Weaknesses:**

- 1) Nothing published regarding timeliness of DARS (now DARWIN) evaluation request since transcripts remain in student's file until official request is initiated by the student; this causes problems when the student is ready to graduate.
- 2) Financial aid may be withdrawn from students whose total number of credits exceeds 150% of the credits required to complete their declared majors.

**Recommendations**

**Areas of strengths to be commended**

- 1) The TMCC default rate for loan repayments (8.9%) is significantly below the federal standard (20%).
- 2) TMCC actively pursues donors for the College's Scholarship Fund through the Foundation Office and generously awards students in need.

**Measures to address weaknesses**

- 1) Need to inform students and publish information in various places regarding the timely request for evaluation of transcripts so these do not "sit" in a student's file.

**Timeline for implementation**

## STANDARD THREE: STUDENTS

### Element 3.D - Student Services

The institution recruits and admits students qualified to complete its programs. It fosters a supportive learning environment and provides services to support students' achievement of their educational goals.

**Indicator:** Financial Aid: Categories

**3.D.7 Information regarding the categories of financial assistance (scholarships and grants) [AND EMPLOYMENT] is published and made available to both prospective and enrolled students.**

#### Detailed Findings

#### Narrative summary of progress – or not – since last report

The **1995 Regular Report** mentions that TMCC published a “Student Financial Aid Program Brochure (95-96)” informing students of the types of aid, procedures for obtaining aid, rights/responsibilities, and other services offered. This brochure is still being published as well as additional pamphlets and documents are provided as indicated below.

**Current Status:** In addition to a TMCC brochure, the Financial Aid Office provides a governmental brochure titled “Easy as 1-2-3” to guide individuals through the process of applying for financial assistance via the FAFSA document. Fall 2000 marked the opportunity to apply for federal aid online in addition to the paper application. In Fall 2004, the paper application was completely eliminated. The Office also provides a “Financial Aid Checklist,” and a “Financial Aid Information Sheet” to complete the process. A flyer titled “Free Scholarship and Financial Aid Resources on the Web” is available as another resource. The Financial Aid Office has been highly praised as a model site by former students as indicated by \_\_\_\_\_ (evidence of this claim???).

Financial assistance consists of a variety of categories such as: scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment. Loans are discussed in Indicator 3.D.8. Below are three categories which include the various types within each followed by a more detailed description. (*Catalog, p. 13 & [Website](#), and flyers posted on bulletin boards at all college sites*)

Students (enrolled and prospective) and their parents can also learn about financial assistance by attending the annual “Financial Aid Information Night” and through Workshops on Scholarships and Loans sponsored by the F.A. Office.

**SCHOLARSHIPS.** There are several major sources of funds: TMCC Scholarships, Agency/ Off-Campus Scholarships, Millennium Scholarships, Tribal Scholarships, and ESL Scholarships, and Other.

**Millennium Scholarship:** This scholarship is awarded by the State of Nevada Treasurer’s office to all Nevada high school seniors who have met Millennium Scholarship requirements. The Millennium Scholarship value at TMCC is \$40 per credit. Students receiving the Millennium Scholarship must have

selected a degree program. Eligible students who attend TMCC during the summer must pay for their own classes and will be reimbursed near the end of September. (Need stats on how many using this???)

**TMCC Scholarships:** Private donors and organizations have made scholarships available to TMCC students who meet the application deadlines and the established criteria for eligibility. These criteria vary for each scholarship. Awards are determined by committee process each spring for the following year. Applications are available online beginning December 1 and are due on March 1 of each year. TMCC scholarship policy requires students to complete a minimum of six credits in the fall semester with a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in order to receive the spring portion of their award. In Fall 2003, the Foundation funded 500 scholarships for 04-05 for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. ???

**Agency/Off-Campus Scholarships:** Students who have been awarded a scholarship from an outside agency and want to apply their award to their costs of attending TMCC should have their donor contact TMCC financial aid, scholarship and student employment office. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate the disbursement process between the donor and the college. In order to ensure adequate time for payment of fees, funds must arrive six weeks prior to the start of each term.

**Tribal Scholarships:** These scholarships are for eligible Native Americans and offered through the individual tribes. Students initiate the application process by contacting the respective Tribal office.

**ESL Scholarships:** The College ESL Office coordinates some scholarship funds provided by a private donor and a local bank for new and continuing college-level ESL students. Approximately 160 students are eligible to receive a total of \$33,000 per year.

**Other:** The Re-Entry Center actively involves its students in applying for scholarships provided by the Nevada Women's Fund, Zonta Professional Women's Organization, Soroptimist International of Truckee Meadows, Soroptimist International of Reno, USA Funds, and others that arise during the year.

**GRANTS:** There are five major sources of funds: Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity (SEOG), Nevada Student Incentive Grant/Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (NSIC), Grant-in-Aid (GIA), and Bureau of Indian Affairs Grants (BIA)

**Federal Pell Grant:** Students must have applied for financial aid with the FAFSA This grant is funded by the federal government and awarded to eligible students who have not yet received a bachelor's degree. The amount of the grant is determined by a needs analysis. The actual award is based on the results of the needs analysis, the student budget at the institution, and the number of credits for which the student enrolls.

**Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity (SEOG):** These limited funds are for students who qualify for a Pell Grant but still demonstrate considerable financial need after the initial offer package is determined. Students who show the greatest need are given preference for this grant.

**Nevada Student Incentive Grant/Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (NSIC):** These limited funds are for Nevada residents who are enrolled at least half-time (six credits) and have considerable financial need. Students who show the least ability to contribute to their educational costs are given preference for the grant.

**Grant-in-Aid (GIA):** these limited funds are for Nevada residents who meet need and scholarship requirements. There is a separate application form for this grant available in the TMCC Financial Aid Office.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs Grant (BIA):** This grant is for eligible Native Americans and offered by the BIA through the individual tribes or BIA agencies. Students initiate the application process by contacting their specific tribal office.

**Estate Tax Grant:** These limited funds are available for Nevada residents enrolled at least half-time (six credits) and the TMCC financial aid office determines eligibility bases on need or merit.

**EMPLOYMENT.** There are three types of student employment opportunities. Only one is available for those qualifying for financial aid, i.e., the Federal and the State Work-Study Program. Students need not be financial aid recipients to be eligible for the Regents Award Program and Student Employment.

**Federal and State Work-Study Program:** These programs provide eligible students with funds to pay hourly wages earned by working in an approved job. Students apply for financial aid using the FAFSA and are informed via an award letter on Web-Reg if they are eligible. Job listings are posted on the Web.

**Regents Award Program:** this state-funded work program offers students positions that require a higher level of skill or knowledge and are more directly related to their career goals. Students need not be eligible for financial aid but must meet state-mandated eligibility criteria. Positions are posted on the Web at [www.tmcc.edu/finaid/employment.asp](http://www.tmcc.edu/finaid/employment.asp).

**Student Employment:** students who have not qualified for either of the work-study programs may apply for on- or off-campus jobs as available. These jobs are posted on the Web at [www.tmcc.edu/finaid/employment/asp](http://www.tmcc.edu/finaid/employment/asp).

### Detailed Analysis

#### Strengths

- 1) Since Fall 2000, students have been able to apply for financial aid by using the Internet. This greatly enhances the response time to their requests. Students are able to complete their online application with staff assistance.
- 2) The establishment of the Millennium Scholarships for the state's graduating high school students has increased enrolment in higher education institutions throughout Nevada, including TMCC.  
(need stats as evidence)
- 3) Through the efforts of the Foundation Office and many other staff efforts on campus, the college has secured a large endowment fund from which it has been able to offer a wide range of scholarships.

- 4) For students who choose to attend half-time (6 credits) rather than full-time, there are still opportunities to receive financial aid through the Nevada Student Incentive Grant and Estate Tax Grant.
- 5) Enrolled and prospective students and their parents are able to learn about the College's financial aid resources and procedures during events sponsored by the Financial Aid Office.

### **Weaknesses**

- 1) Students who are receiving grants from outside agencies must coordinate the disbursement process between donor and the College well in advance (6 weeks) prior to the start of the semester.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Areas of strengths to be commended**

- 1) The Millennium Scholarship provides an affordable and fantastic opportunity for graduating seniors from Nevada high schools to attend college
- 1) The College is committed to assisting students financially wherever possible as evidenced by the amount of funds supplied through the TMCC Foundation Office and the coordination of other scholarships earmarked for a variety of special needs students.

#### **Measures to address weaknesses**

#### **Timeline for implementation**

## STANDARD THREE: STUDENTS

### Element 3.D - Student Services

The institution recruits and admits students qualified to complete its programs. It fosters a supportive learning environment and provides services to support students' achievement of their educational goals.

**Indicator:** *Financial Aid – Loan Program*

**3.D.8** The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and the institutional loan default rate. Informational sessions which give attention to loan repayment obligations are conducted for financial aid recipients.

#### Detailed Findings

#### Narrative summary of progress – or not – since last report

As stated in the 1995 Regular Report and also reviewed in Indicator 3D.6, the control of funds and monitoring of student loan programs occurs within the following inter-departmental interactions.

- Controller's Office and FA Office collaborate on internal budget accounts including prompt provision of status reports
- Controller's Office and FA Office coordinate billings and disbursements
- Controller's Office is responsible for collections
- A&R and FA Office collaborate on monitoring academic progress of student aid recipients, including the work hours of those who are student employees

The College's student default rate is still well under the 20% established by the U.S. Dept of Education whereby the institution is required to implement reduction measures. In 1992, TMCC's rate was 9.5% and the latest figures from 2002 is 8.9% Loans in 2003 totaled \$3,308,461 compared to 1,714,512 in 1992.

**Current Status:** There are five different loan packages of which TMCC offers four: Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Stafford Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized), Federal PLUS Loan, and an Emergency Loan. The Federal Direct Loan is unavailable at TMCC. (*Catalog p 13; FA website homepage*)

Students must have applied for financial aid with the FAFSA. To receive the separate loan application from an external lender, students must attend a group workshop. Previous TMCC borrowers are not required to attend a workshop and may request a loan by contacting financial aid.

Prior to receiving the first loan check, the student must have attended either a group or individual "entrance interview" session. Prior to receiving their second disbursement, graduating or leaving school or dropping below six credits, students must attend an "exit interview" session or complete an online exit process.

Does interview and online process ask same info???

**Federal Perkins Loan:** this is a long-term, low-interest loan. The TMCC financial aid office determines who is eligible and the amount of the loan. Students having exceptional need and the least

ability to contribute to their own educational costs are given priority. Repayment begins when the student graduates, leaves school, or drops below six credits. [repayment begins 6 months after these three conditions]

**Federal Stafford Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized):** these are low-interest, need-based and non need-basis loans, respectively, made by banks and other commercial lending institutions to students. The interest rates are variable and are linked to the Treasury Bill Rate. Repayment begins when the student graduates, leaves school, or drops below half-time (six credits). [repayment begins 6 months after these three conditions]

**Federal Plus Loan:** the Plus loan is for the parents of dependent students. The interest rates are variable and linked to the Treasury Bill Rate. Repayment of Plus loans begins 60 days after the final disbursement of the loan check.

**Emergency Loan:** any TMCC students who are enrolled at least half-time (six credits), whose fees have been paid or deferred, and have a bona fide emergency during the school term related to educational expenses may apply for a loan of a maximum of \$200. This loan must be repaid within 30 days and requires a \$1 processing fee. Students may receive one loan per term.

**Federal Direct Loan:** TMCC does not participate in this program.

**Loans Repayment Obligations** are spelled out in the Catalog (*p 13 and TMCC Website.*) Some highlights are:

- Federal Perkins and Stafford Loans: Repayment begins when the student graduates, leaves school or drops below six credits.
- Federal PLUS Loan: Repayment of Plus loans begins 60 days after the final disbursement of the loan check.
- Emergency Loan: This loan must be repaid within 30 days and requires a \$1 processing fee.

**Consequences of not repaying a student loan.** *Only the TMCC Website lists the seven penalties for failure to repay one's debt.*

- You will be reported to a credit bureau having a negative effect on your credit rating.
- You can be referred to a collection agency and have to pay collection costs.
- Your employer may garnish your wages.
- The Internal Revenue Service may withhold your state and federal income tax returns.
- The entire unpaid amount of your loan, including interest, may become due and payable immediately.
- You will lose your rights to deferments.
- You will be ineligible to receive any additional federal or state financial aid.

New Student Orientation sessions, the GOLD, SILVER and QUEST program target specific populations to present a variety of comprehensive information including financial aid overview. Throughout the year, additional workshops are held on loans and scholarships. Every Spring term, a "Financial Aid Information Night" is sponsored for current and prospective students and their parents. [any stats on attendance count in these sessions ?????]

## **Detailed Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- 1) The College's default rate is well under the federal limit.
- 2) There are a wide variety of loan packages available.

### **Weaknesses**

- 1) Where published for students to know about 6-month grace period to begin paying back a loan after graduating or leaving school???
- 2) Where published for students to know consequences of not repaying debt listed on website ONLY ???

## **Recommendations**

### **Areas of strengths to be commended**

- 1) Holding the line of the default rate.

### **Measures to address weaknesses**

### **Timeline for implementation**

## STANDARD THREE: STUDENTS

### Element 3.D - Student Services

The institution recruits and admits students qualified to complete its programs. It fosters a supportive learning environment and provides services to support students' achievement of their educational goals.

#### Indicator: *Orientation*

3.D.9 The institution provides for the orientation of new students, including special populations, at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

#### Detailed Findings

#### Narrative summary of progress – or not – since last report

Since last report in both the 1995 Regular and Interim issues, the following was listed under orientation section and needs to be addressed for current status ????????????

Discover; Discover to Go (status, persistence rate)

Six-Week Success Program

High School Outreach

Early Warning System

Parking Lot Socials

....database of potential interest for enrollment (still exist ... and used?)

**Current Status:** There are a variety of orientation sessions targeted for specific students at the undergraduate level. Departments sponsoring these are: New Student Programs, Re-Entry Center, Veterans Upward Bound, and departments within the Health Sciences division. They range from several hours to all-day. Several departments also hold monthly informational meetings that acquaint individuals with particular programs and general college information.

#### **Generating Opportunities for Learning and Development (GOLD) Session -- New Student Orientation**

These orientation sessions offered by New Student Programs are for those students who have never attended college and who, 1) plan to graduate from TMCC or 2) plan to enroll at TMCC and then transfer to another institution. This program will focus on college registration procedures, campus tour, financial aid overview, how to navigate the college course catalog and class schedules and how to prepare for college classes. [ask Laura if acad adv is included????????? --- After reviewing surveys, appears it is not offered]

#### **Silver Session -- Transfer and Degree-Holding Orientation**

These orientation sessions offered by New Student Programs are designed with the special needs of transfer students. Students from other institutions, with previous college academic work, or who already hold a college degree are encouraged to attend. These sessions will focus on TMCC services and programs, campus tour, and registration procedures. [ask Laura if acad adv is included????????? --- After reviewing surveys, appears it is not offered]

Student evaluations for both the *Gold* and *Silver* for Fall 2003 through Fall 2004 are available in **Exhibit ????**

A comparison of Fall '03 to Fall '04 for the Gold group .... And for the Silver group.....shows:

OR

A comparison of the Silver group ... and Gold Group ..... for 03-04 (fall and spring) shows:

### **Quality Education Starts at TMCC (QUEST) -- New Students**

QUEST is a freshman-year experience program offered by New Student Programs and designed to help students be successful in college. Students who choose to participate in QUEST will receive a guaranteed class schedule, faculty mentoring and a customized educational plan. This plan is a contract signed by the student agreeing to the criteria of enrolling in 12 credits which consist of an English and math class, a College Study Skills class, and an elective. Students are tracked and monitored for early intervention to increase retention. A new position has been designated to coordinate this program. (How and what are stats??? and need Evals )

### **Re-Entry Center**

The Re-Entry Center offers assistance to special populations (individuals with unique challenges and barriers) who are returning to or continuing in school and/or the workplace. Potential clientele attend a monthly Center Informational Meeting. At this time, the Director explains all of the Center services. Applications are then reviewed and assigned to Center staff for individual follow-up. The names of those who express an interest in pursuing an education at TMCC are put on a waitlist for the next round of intakes. Individuals are then interviewed for the Educational Partnership Program from this competitive list of qualified applicants. Those individuals selected from the interview process, for either the federal Perkins Grant or the Wings privately-funded program, attend a mandatory all-day orientation which provides introduction of staff and students, detailed information about Center services and requirements, financial aid, tutoring and writing assistance, and many other campus and community resources. Academic advisement sessions are provided to create an individualized Career Development Plan to include, if needed, the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator and the Strong Interest Inventory assessments, and planning the student's sequence of classes till graduation.

For Re-Entry clientele who are displaced homemakers and in need of employment to be self-sufficient, job search services are provided. Clients access services through attendance at the monthly Center Informational Meeting. On an emergency basis, eligible clients are seen before the monthly meeting, but are required to attend the next offering. (need evals)

### **Veterans Upward Bound Program**

The Veterans Upward Bound Program is an educational program designed to assist veterans in preparing for success in college and other postsecondary training. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and provides a comprehensive program of support services to improve both academic and motivational skills. VUB considers their orientation process to begin the minute the potential participant makes initial contact with them. Over several days, the process consists of: completing an application; attending an eligibility intake interview; pre-testing via the California Achievement Test, the Accuplacer, and/or the COPS Interest Inventory; and participating in developing an Individual Career Plan. The individual sessions are followed by a group orientation which provides a history of VUB, introduction of staff and students, distribution of books and supplies, and informal social integration

(Need Evals)

### **International Students**

New students must attend an orientation prior to their first semester at TMCC. This session provides Academic advisement, international student rules, regulations, and responsibilities and information about services and programs at TMCC. Students must bring their passport with a valid visa and their I-94 to the Admissions and Records office. Students on an F-1 visa from another school must also show proof of being enrolled in 12 credits at their parent institution.

(Need Evals)

### **Other**

The Health Sciences division sponsors monthly meetings which provide interested students with information regarding specific admissions procedures. Once students are accepted into a particular program of study, they are required to attend an orientation session.

## **Detailed Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- 1) The variety of Orientation offerings for various levels of entry by students indicates the College's attempts to accommodate the individual needs of students.
- 2) Even though early in the stages of the evolution of QUEST, the new Orientation procedure, it appears successful and maintains a high retention rate. [check stats ??????????]
- 3) Re-Entry Center continues to be refunded for past \_\_\_\_\_?? years.
- 4) Veterans Upward Bound continues to be refunded for past 15 years.

**Weaknesses**

- 1) **How are parents involved in these varied Orientation offerings, if at all?**

**Recommendations**

**Areas of strength to be commended:**

- 1) Special orientation sessions sponsored by programs (such as QUEST, Re-Entry Center, Veterans Upward Bound, and Health Sciences offer detailed information about services and academic advisement to fully engage students to become successful in college.

**Measures to address weaknesses**

**Timeline for implementation**

## STANDARD 3: STUDENTS

### Element 3.D - Student Services

**The institution recruits and admits students qualified to complete its programs. It fosters a supportive learning environment and provides services to support students' achievement of their educational goals.**

#### **Indicator:**

#### **3.D.10 Academic Advisement / Career Exploration**

A systematic program of academic and other educational program advisement is provided. Advisors help students make appropriate decisions concerning academic choices and career paths. Specific advisor responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students. (Also refer to Standards Two and Four, Standard Indicators 2.C.5 and 4.A.2).

#### ***Review Standards Two and Four:***

*Indicator 2.C.5: The institution designs and maintains effective academic advising programs (3.D.10 and 3.D.11) to meet student needs for information and advice, and **adequately informs and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function.***

*Indicator 4.A.2: Faculty participates in academic planning, curriculum development and review, **academic advising**, and institutional governance.*

### **Detailed Findings**

#### **Narrative summary of progress – or not – since last report**

**In the 1995 Regular and Interim Reports**, the Office of Counseling, Testing, and Special Programs existed to provide the following:

- counseling, advisement, career planning and transfer services
- testing and academic assessment
- tutoring and supplemental instruction
- accommodation services
- instructional program focusing on career exploration, personal growth, and academic development.

Reporting to the Director of this department were seven (five FTE) counselors, two coordinators, and two specialists, with classified staff supporting each functional area.

Restructuring of the above functions have been underway for several years. The name has been changed to the Department of Counseling, Advisement, and Career Services (CACS). The opening in Fall 2004 of the newly-constructed V. James Eardley Student Services Center provided the opportunity to fully implement the creation of three separate but interrelated Centers to provide counseling, advisement, and career planning. Academic assessment is now under the Admissions & Records office. Other types of testing have become the responsibility of the ACT Center with the the division of WDCE. Tutoring has been moved to the academic division. Accommodation services are now operated under Student

Outreach Services which provides a Disability Resource Center on the Dandini campus. The Department of CACS no longer plays a role in offering instructional programs for career exploration, personal growth and academic development, but does provide non-credit workshops on these topics.

**The report stated** that the Counseling Center was accredited by the IACS (International Association of Counseling Services) from May 1993 to April 1996 and that TMCC was one of three such accredited community college counseling centers in the U.S. TMCC no longer has this accrediting status since the IACS eliminated their services to the community colleges, but rather focuses only on universities.

**Under “Weaknesses”** (for Advising, Counseling, Testing), the 1995 report listed:

-- *“No set standard for faculty advising”*

this has now changed due to the implementation of a new program which trains volunteer faculty to provide academic advising

-- *“Little or no advising done by transfer faculty and entirely done by counselors”*

of the current faculty advisors one-third of them teach university parallel courses which enables them to provide transfer advising (transfer faculty is not a term used at the College)

-- *“Testing facilities were cited as being crowded”*

the location in the new student services center has increased in square footage, increased in the number of computers, and in a centralized place among other student services offices

**Under “Weaknesses”** (for entire Student Services Division): the 1995 report stated:

-- *“The College and the division needed to review the areas of advisement, job placement, and student retention to determine how best to improve services for students.”*

Currently these weaknesses have been greatly improved with the new approach of three distinct Centers focusing on each of these areas. Plans are underway to implement the formalized structure of an educational plan for each student. The position of Retention Coordinator has been funded by the College and recruitment is in process.

-- *“All Student Services areas needed to refine their methods of evaluation of services and programs and include qualitative as well as quantitative analyses.”*

An online evaluation instrument has been designed to solicit student feedback on advising and counseling services. A survey card requesting email contact information is given to students immediately prior to their visit with the staff member. The Director sends the survey information link by email to the student who can then respond anonymously. The Director uses this information to make changes and improvements in the department. There are plans to have a similar evaluation instrument for the Career Center users.

The 1995 Report listed six areas of specialty and the following updates this information:

- the Counseling Center which still exists;

- the Career Planning Center which was renamed the Career Center;

- the Transfer Center which existed for a short time but was eliminated and replaced by a UNR Transfer Coordinator who visits the TMCC Dandini campus once a month and is available in the student services center for individual appointments. The Coordinator provides TMCC with updated information on changes at UNR. TMCC transfer agreements with many universities are available online on the counseling web page. At this point in time, these agreements are not formally advertised to students but they are referred to the website when they are seeking transfer information.

- Testing Services for math, English, and reading skills are available through the Accuplacer which replaced the CPT (Computerized Placement Test) in 1999 and is primarily the responsibility of the Admissions & Records Office. It is located in the new and spacious V. James Eardley Student Services Center. GED instruction for is done at the Meadowood facility through the ABE/ESL office. When students are ready to take the GED test, they register, schedule the testing date, and pay the \$50 fee in RDMT 325, but the testing is done at the TMCC/IGT Applied Technology Center on Edison Way. Licensure testing and certification in numerous areas are handled through the Workforce Development and Continuing Education Division at the Meadowood facility. The Director of CACS handles a limited number of other occupational certifications.

The Report mentioned that the UNR math department required students to be assessed by TMCC prior to enrollment in UNR math classes. This is no longer being done. The Report also stated that the College was considering the feasibility of assessing and placing students prior to entering technology programs. This project was never implemented. **(reasons for lack of implementation ???)**

- Supplemental Instruction (SI): group learning techniques were facilitated by student leaders for courses with high attrition rates, specifically BIOL 223, 224, and 251. This program required a student to attend these classes and then teach them in small groups to their peers. Although it operated for several years and was highly successful, it was not cost effective and was replaced by the Learning Hub where group and individual tutoring was provided. Recently, the Learning Hub was eliminated and replaced by the Math Center, along with the existing Writing Center, and the new SOURCE for specific tutoring needs.

- Accommodation Services: a variety of services were offered to students with “identified” physical and learning disabilities **(not stated in the previous report, but emotional and mental disorders are also covered under the ADA)**. Much expansion has been accomplished in this area by establishing the Student Outreach Services at the Meadowood facility with two counselors, an office manager who provides academic advising and a Professional Advisor in the Disability Resource Center on the Dandini campus.

**Current Status:** The 03-04 Catalog (p 15), Schedule (p 105), Student Handbook (p 19) and Website all publish information about counseling, advisement, and career exploration. However, the three different titles of these sections: “Advisement/Educational Planning,” “Career Exploration/Career Center”, and “Counseling and Advisement Center” lack sufficient distinction due to the seeming overlap of services described. Although these functions do relate to one another, the manner in which they are titled and promoted can be confusing to students. Over the years, many changes have taken place since the last review, and major transitions are still occurring. The Fall '05 publications and Website will reflect these changes described below.

A new systematic program of advisement is in the infancy stages. Each counselor who has liaison responsibility with an academic group or division consulted with the department contact and obtained a prescribed course sequence for that program of study. A formalized educational plan is then developed by the counselors who will make the plan available online for use by other staff who interact with a student. Although the target audience for this educational plan is full-time, degree-seeking individuals with identified majors, which represent about one-third of the student population, it can be modified for any student. Pre-requisites and Accuplacer scores are reviewed as an addition to the academic sequence of classes. This educational plan also serves to flush out other needs and options for the student. Since advising is considered prescriptive, the specific needs of the student are addressed at the time of the visit

regarding what is needed at that moment. *Other* educational program advisement is interpreted to mean career exploration. Individuals with this desire are referred to the Counseling Center and Career Center.

**Centers:** There are three centers within the department the Department: Advising Center, Counseling Center, and Career Center.

**Advising Center:** There are four advisors and five peer advisors. Peer Advisor positions were implemented in ???April, 2001 and Advisor positions were established in August, 2002. One advisor trains and supervises the peer advisors, one is a career specialist, and one primarily focuses on international students. Professional Advisors are responsible for providing academic advisement and services, evaluating student academic goals, and preparing an academic plan. Advisors make appropriate referrals for career development, testing and assessment, financial aid, personal counseling, and other services.

Peer Advisors are hired and trained to assume the duties and responsibilities of the professional advisors. They advise students regarding academic requirements, scheduling, college survival, and represent the college at orientation sessions and recruitment events. Peer Advisors make appropriate referrals for career development, testing and assessment, financial aid, personal counseling, and other services. A reference manual has been created to assist the Peer Advisors with their various tasks.

A new effort has been made in Fall '04 to formally involve faculty in the advising process. There are currently nine faculty advisors with subject-matter expertise who are trained by an Advisor to assist the students. Faculty volunteer, select the times they are available, and are given office space in the Advising Center which schedules appointments. Faculty with the vocational programs at the TMCC/IGT Applied Technology Center provide advising for students pursuing these types of occupations.

Advising for populations such as students with disabilities, displaced homemakers, single parents, and veterans consists of special counseling staff focused on these areas. The Disability Resource Center has an Advisor who is located in the V. James Eardley Student Services Center; the other counselors are located at the Meadowood facility in the Re-Entry Center, the office of Student Outreach Services, and Veterans Upward Bound. The Administrative Assistant staffing the Meadowood Education Center also provides basic guidance and some advising.

Based on a start-up grant from TMCC Foundation, one counselor began a pilot program in August 2003 to provide academic advising online for distance education students using the address [e-learning@tmcc.edu](mailto:e-learning@tmcc.edu). Appointments are available between the hours of 8:30 and 5:00 from Monday through Thursday. The beauty of this online service is that the counselor can broadcast anything from his screen to students' screen while they are talking to them via computer speakers. If speakers are not available, the chat room allows them to type their communication in real time.

**Counseling Center:** Including the Director, there are six counselors. One position primarily focuses on career counseling (candidate to come on board by Nov 1). Counselors are responsible for providing short-term personal counseling, referrals to community providers for longer-term therapy, career exploration, educational planning, and academic advisement only during peak times surrounding registration and the beginning of the semester. The Director and the new Career Counselor interpret the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator and the Strong Interest Inventory assessment instruments. A new role for counselors which is just being implemented is assisting with the retention of students,

specifically those on financial aid probation, and mentoring new students. For answers to the most frequently asked questions, individuals can access the Center online at [www.tmcc.edu/counseling](http://www.tmcc.edu/counseling).

Populations such as students with disabilities, displaced homemakers, single parents, and veterans have access to special counseling staff focused on these areas. The Disability Resource Center has an Advisor who is located in the V. James Eardley Student Services Center; the other counselors are located at the Meadowood facility in the Re-Entry Center, the office of Student Outreach Services, and Veterans Upward Bound.

Both the Counseling and Advising Centers see potential students who are not officially in the system yet to provide them with general information in anticipation of their enrolling in classes. Local agencies, such as the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation refer clients to TMCC for education information.

**Career Center:** There is one Career Specialist who provides career exploration activities through inquiry of the student and guiding the use of the Internet and various other software programs dedicated to this topic, such as personality and interest assessments, occupational research, etc. The Career Specialist is bilingual. The Career Counselor and other Counselors are available for further exploration, assessment interpretation, and other career services. A Job Placement Specialist assists students in finding employment upon graduation and collaborates with faculty and students on internship placements. This specialist offers workshops on job search strategies such as resumes, interviews, etc., coordinates the Virtual Career Fair online, and represents the College on the committee that sponsors the bi-annual community Career Builder Fair. Students can connect online at [www.tmcc.edu/careercenter](http://www.tmcc.edu/careercenter).

### Detailed Analysis

#### Strengths

- 1) With the establishment of three distinct Centers, there are many advantages: the process for advising, counseling, and career exploration is less confusing for the students; there is an opportunity for focused efforts in each area; promotion of a better flow of information specific to the task at hand; and separate meetings for each Center with the Director as well as a meeting combining all of them.
- 2) The new student services facility is spacious, more welcoming, and provides easier access to other services that have separate, but related functions.
- 3) Many of the staff have been with the College for a long period of time.
- 4) The advent of a Career Counselor, Advisors, and Peer Advisors enhances the ability to offer students many choices for their individual needs in a more timely fashion.
- 5) Provision for online academic advising for distance education students. .... Or .....  
Online services, including advisement, are now a component of overall CACS services.
- 6) The College is able to offer testing and placement at satellite locations and area high schools. Accuplacer is available at Edison site and all county high schools, with the exception of Reno HS and Incline Village HS.

- 7) Increased computer stations for Testing Center.

### **Weaknesses**

- 1) Because of the separation of the various department functions into the distinct Centers, there is some confusion for the students during this time of transition since the location of the Centers is in two different wings of the building. Given a sufficient time frame to evaluate this transition, modifications can be made.
- 2) There are no Accuplacer testing services available at the Meadowood Center.
- 3) The chat room stated then ended abruptly this year. (why????)

### **Recommendations**

#### **Areas of strengths to be commended**

- 1) Kudos for innovation in providing distance education students with interactive academic advising through Linktivity software, allowing direct communication with a counselor from their computer and decreasing the need to visit the office on campus.
- 2) The new student services center is a wonderful and much-needed addition to the College; having ample space for testing, academic advising, and career services available in close proximity is a tremendous benefit for the students and staff. There is also less overlapping of duplicative services.
- 3) New testing facility has expanded Accuplacer hours and able to accommodate more students due to increase in space and number of computers on the main campus.
- 3) Both Meadowood and Edison sites are able to offer on-site counseling services.

#### **Measures to address weaknesses**

- 1) Establish a service for Accuplacer testing at Meadowood Center, either within the Library of the ACT section of WDCE.
- 2) Increase offerings of testing at Dandini campus.

#### **Timeline for implementation**

## STANDARD 3: STUDENTS

### Element 3.D - Student Services

**The institution recruits and admits students qualified to complete its programs. It fosters a supportive learning environment and provides services to support students' achievement of their educational goals.**

#### **Indicator:**

#### **3.D.11 Career Counseling & Job Placement**

Career counseling and placement services are consistent with student needs and institutional mission.

#### Detailed Findings

#### Narrative summary of progress – or not – since last report

Both the 1995 Regular and Interim Reports addressed job placement services. They stated that “TMCC does not have a formal placement office.” The functions were spread through various programs and courses, such as Student Services, the Re-Entry Center, Veterans Upward Bound, Smart Starts, and the Office for Internship Cooperative Education. It mentioned further that graduates are surveyed to determine what placement services are needed, academic faculty assist students informally, and a job-board listing existed for part-time jobs within the community. Also job-skill building experiences were combined with career counseling services to prepare students for the world of work.

At that time, it was recognized that plans were in place to reinstate the position of job placement specialist if additional funds became available. Part of the plan was to establish a student tracking and follow-up system to assess student success and employment. **(WHAT WAS DONE IN THIS AREA ???)** The report strongly suggested that the college address the need for additional placement services and give high priority to developing a clearly articulated policy for the use of these services within the institution.

The current Job Placement Specialist was hired in 1997 to coordinate and support the occupational and transfer programs at the college. Beginning 1997 through 1998, the Career Planning and Placement Office utilized a data based called “Resume Expert.” The database **(is this really a true “database” or just the name of the software program???)** was funded through the ASTM for two years; it was not funded the third year.

The Career Planning and Placement Services area was moved from the Dandini Campus to Old Town Mall and a partnership was created with the State of Nevada, Department of Employment and Training, or “JobConnect.” It resided at that location and offered services until it was moved to the Dandini Campus to await the completion of the new wing of the Red Mountain Building. This Office remained under Student Services from 2002 to 2004 offering virtually little services. Now, the services are provided as part of Counseling, Advisement, and Career Services and reside in the new student services center. **(Laura wants to re-word this section)**

**Current Status:** Information published in the '03-04 Catalog, Schedule, Student Handbook and on the Website will change in the Fall '05 sources to reflect the major restructuring of the Department. Smart Starts no longer exists and the Office for Internship Cooperative Education has been absorbed into

functions of the Job Placement Specialist. Students with career and employment needs are encouraged to take advantage of the services offered through Career Planning and Job Placement in a four (4) step process: Assess, Explore, Focus, and Implement.

1. Assess: students have the opportunity to be assessed in order to identify personal strengths and weaknesses and find assistance in making career decisions. Students are encouraged to develop an Individual Career Plan.
2. Explore: students learn career awareness through exploring occupational interests, personal characteristics and information gathering techniques for available career options.
3. Focus: students are encouraged to participate in an internship experience. Students learn essential ways to focus on a job and gain valuable work experience by linking with employers to develop work readiness skills. Employer services are also provided.
4. Implement: students are provided a wide variety of services, advisement, and workshops to assist in implementing professional job search strategies, resume preparation, interview techniques, networking opportunities and participation in various career fairs.

Students who are graduating receive a graduate survey [WHEN and HOW??] requesting interest and employment information as well as other college information. This document is prepared and maintained through the Institutional Research Office. Also, contact is made for placement services with students who have applied for graduation. [WHEN and HOW??] The “Jobs Board” is provided through a Carl Perkins Grant and maintained in the Financial Aid Office. Employers are encouraged to list employment opportunities and are surveyed each month to see if Truckee Meadows Community College Students were hired. [HOW ARE THEY SURVEYED??]

### Detailed Analysis

#### Strengths

- 1) The new facility...centralized staff to offer career and job search and placement services.
- 2) Career Planning and Job Placement services have been formalized into a detailed, four-step process.
- 3) Integration of Career Planning and Job Placement into overall student services is an asset in students’ retention, graduation, and subsequent success in their careers.
- 4) There is more promotion and advertising of Career Planning and Job Placement services, including workshops, such as resume writing, networking, interviewing, etc.
- 5) A new position in the department is that of a Career Counselor, recognizing the importance of assisting students in their future life work.

#### Weaknesses

- 1) Need new database to enhance services and better data collection.
- 2) Need more promotional advertisement of services – flyers or posters – at all the campus sites.

## **Recommendations**

### **Areas of strengths to be commended**

- 1) A dedicated Career Counselor will be an asset for TMCC students throughout their process of preparing for the world of work.
- 2) Career Planning and Job Placement have been integrated into the Department of CACS in one centralized location on the main campus.

### **Measures to address weaknesses**

### **Timeline for implementation**