

SEA PROGRAM AND BUDGET Q&A

(October 2, 2019)

1. *What's the purpose of the open SEA budget meeting?*

The open SEA budget meetings (Sept. 25 and Oct. 3, 2019) have been scheduled at the request of Integrated Student Success Committee (ISSC) members. These open sessions provide opportunities for transparent budget discussions, SEA Program review, sharing history of SEA program prior to consolidation, and gathering input to shape the future of SEA Program at SRJC. These sessions are in addition to regular ISSC meetings to allow ample time for discussion.

2. *What are the requirements of SEA Program?*

The following excerpt is from Ed Code 78222 when SEA Program was established on July 1, 2018 to support the system goals with emphasis on closing equity gaps.

As a condition of the receipt of funds for purposes of this section, a district shall comply with all of the following:

- Maintain a student equity plan pursuant to Section 78220 to ensure equal educational opportunities and to promote student success for all students, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances.
- Provide matriculation services (orientation, counseling and advising, referral to specialized student support services, and other education planning services needed to assist a student in making informed decisions about his or her educational goal and course of study and in developing an education plan).
- Adopt and implement AB 705
- Provide all non-exempt* students with an education plan

*Students may be exempted per Ed Code 79215: concurrent students, students already have a degree, students enrolled for personal interest or maintaining licenses.

3. *Why are most of the SEA funds allocated to Student Services? Why are the majority of the funds tied to personnel costs?*

Prior to the consolidation of SSSP, Student Equity, and BSI, these programs had separate requirements. The majority of SEA funding comes from SSSP (both Credit and Noncredit), which was specifically for delivering mandated matriculation services including orientation, assessment, counseling, education planning, and follow-up services. Those funds allowed SRJC to increase personnel capacity in several departments to deliver these required services. Local research has shown that students who participate in these services have higher retention and persistence rates, and their time-to-degree is significantly shorter than those who do not partake in matriculation services. These matriculation services are still required by the SEA Program.

In addition to matriculation, the SEA Program also provides personnel support to other areas such as the Transfer Center, the Office of Institutional Research, Tutorial and Writing Centers, MESA, Dream Center, Intercultural Centers, etc.

The overall personnel cost was contained at about 70% of the total allocation as of 2016/17, and there have been no new full-time regular positions hired since then. Meanwhile, the total allocation of SSSP, Student Equity, and BSI has remained the same without COLA since 2017/18. The compounding effect of salary and benefit increases over the last three years has pushed the personnel costs to the current state. Suggestions and ideas are being gathered to reduce personnel costs in SEA Program.

4. *What are the different types of classified staff (Student Success Coordinator, Specialist, and Technician)? How are they different from student success coaches and counselors?*

All position titles link to their corresponding job descriptions.

[Student Success Coordinator](#): Collaborates with faculty and staff to design and implement peer coaching program; coordinates efforts on retention, engagement through Student Success Teams.

[Link to Student Success Teams Outcomes: which have been quite incredible.](#)

[Student Success Specialist](#): Student Success Specialists support the daily operation of assigned programs and departments, and assist in organizing and planning of the support work in their respective areas. Their duties include schedule and supervising student workers, website and other forms of communication, maintain databases, provide reports, etc.

[Student Success Technician](#): Most of these technicians are located at SWC, and support noncredit student population at SWC and many off-campus sites. They provide matriculation services directly to students, including registration, assessment, and follow-up services. Santa Rosa and Petaluma each has one 40% SEA funded technician position that support placement assessment. Each campus has a small number of staff (1.5 FTE) conducting the daily assessment work.

[Student Success Peer Coaches](#): Develop and deliver peer-to-peer workshops on topics designed to assist students acclimate to a college environment and connect them with academic and student support services. Help support Student Resource and Intercultural Centers. Assist students in application, course registration, financial aid application, etc. They do not select classes for students.

Counselors provide academic counseling and education planning. Counselors use their professional knowledge in programs at SRJC and other higher education institutions to help students navigate a vast range of degree and transfer requirements while taking into account students' personal circumstances.

5. *What are forms of direct student support (DSS)?*

With the arrival of Student Equity funding in 2014, many departments looked to that funding source for providing needed support to students. Through a district-wide RFA process and rigorous collaboration among faculty, staff, and administrators across the district, many direct student support programs have been established via Student Equity Plan. Other categorical programs and funding sources have also started to contribute to direct student support. Here are some examples of past and current uses of DSS funds:

Emergency Transportation assistance
EOPS & Foster Youth Book Vouchers
Equity Scholarships
Expanded Library Textbook Reserves
Food Pantry and Bellyful events

Intercultural events on campuses
Laptop / Calculator Loans
Learning Community Textbook Loans
Online Tutoring (Net Tutor)
PALS

Professional Development to support students
Second Chance Student Support (books,
supplies, etc.)

Tutorial and Writing Centers
Welcome events

Faculty and staff in various departments maintain these forms of direct student support. Some of these support formats require a process through Financial Aid to ensure the total student aid packages meet state and federal regulations.

6. *Has SEA Program funding been supporting Guided Pathways, particularly academic support? How can we provide more such support?*

According to the Chancellor's Office, Guided Pathways is not another initiative. It is a framework to advance system-wide goals and to transform the student experience. All college resources are to support GP work.

Guided Pathways has many key components, so it depends on which piece you are discussing in terms of support from SEA Program. One large part of GP is assisting undecided students and this is where Counseling and Educational plans play a big part. This service was also a priority of SSSP under the previous funding stream, and is still a part of the mandated services of the SEA grant. In addition, the work of the Student Success Teams and Welcome Centers, which all involve direct work with students to assist them with onboarding such as enrollment, accessing college services that will assist them to stay in college, and transition to college. These are important elements of GP that have been supported by the SEA Program.

Many academic support initiatives were launched or expanded by SEA funding, including PALS, book reserves, and tutoring. These have been some of the top priorities for Student Equity. When SE funds were on the rise a few years ago, more funds were allocated to these academic support formats. There is strong advocacy at the state level to increase funding for SEA Program. SEA Program funding formula is still in development at the Chancellor's Office.

There are many great programs in need for more resources including academic support efforts. Another example is the Student Success Coaching program. This program has shown to be effective through the pilot at Petaluma Campus. It is also in need of more funds to sustain and expand district-wide.

SEA funded programs undergo annual evaluation supported by OIR. ISSC reviews the data for program effectiveness and is tasked to make recommendations. There will be ongoing discussion at the district level to determine future priorities according to SEA Program requirements and student needs.

7. *Salary cost for Classified, such as a specialist, seems to be around \$100K. Why can't we use the money to provide free textbooks and/or calculators?*

The salary costs listed on the Budget Summary are inclusive of benefits. The actual salary portion ranges from \$60-66K, depending on where the classified professional is on the salary schedule. Benefits make up the additional cost totaling the \$100K listed. In general, benefits account for 30-40% of the total personnel costs.

SEA funding has continuously helped pay for textbooks and calculators. Classified staff is often the key to process requests and deliver these supports to students. Some of these programs existed

before SSSP/Equity programs and were supported by other funding sources, but expanded by SEA funds. For instance, the calculator loan program started in Petaluma was funded by endowment proceeds and was run by the Bookstore. SEA funding is not the only source for direct student support. There are many options to explore.

There are trade-offs in how we spend the funds. Currently funded SEA programs have also found there is no substitution for human relationships where we simply need a funded person to work with students. It may be helpful to share the experiences and outcomes of such programs as Learning Communities, Student Success Teams, Welcome and Connect Center, and Intercultural Centers, among others.

8. *Why can't we look at a plan to close SWC and transition students there to Santa Rosa campus?*

Noncredit programming is inherently community-based. Noncredit courses are free, repeatable, and open to all community members regardless of legal status. These offerings appeal to many immigrant students with limited English language proficiency and formal education. Many of these community-based offerings also provide students childcare in collaboration with community advocacy groups, such as La Luz, CAP Sonoma-Via Esperanza, and Corazon Healdsburg. Many noncredit students depend on the proximity, accessibility, and support resources of a community-based educational site. Our Santa Rosa campus is typically further from home, less accessible in terms of size and complexity, and it does not have the same support resources available, such as: childcare, free parking, and HiSET exam waivers, among others.

If we were to close down the Southwest Center, some noncredit students would probably follow the programming over to the Santa Rosa campus, but a certain segment would not make the transition (previous survey indicated that nearly half of the students would not transition to Santa Rosa campus), and we would lose that enrollment, the vast majority of which is CDCP, thus paid at the full State apportionment rate under the new Student Centered Funding Formula. More importantly, those students would lose the opportunity to pursue their educational goals of improving their English language proficiency, obtaining a High School Equivalency certificate, or completing any number of Adult Education certificates, designed to prepare them to attain high demand jobs relating to the regional Rebuild Sonoma County initiative, such as: construction, landscaping, hardscaping, small business development, hospitality, and beyond.

Lastly, an improved Southwest Center was identified as a priority within the Measure H Bond Program and we owe it to the voters to keep that commitment to our community.

9. *How are we going to close the \$284K deficit that still remain for 2019/20?*

Through the Student Services reorganization, we anticipate to be able to address this remaining deficit, most likely to be accomplished through consolidation of positions. More information will be available as the reorg shapes up.

10. *Student success is part of Academic Senate 10+1. Even though there are faculty members on ISSC, can there be regular report-out to the Senate?*

A regular report from ISSC to Senate is a great idea.

Academic Senate President (or designee) is a co-chair of ISSC. As an effort to keep Academic Senate and ISSC informed of each body's work, there have been regular communications between ISSC co-chairs and Academic Senate President since the beginning of SSSP and Student Equity, and through

the integrated planning of SSSP, SE, and BSI during the past two years. These check-in meetings take place monthly.

In addition, SSSP and Student Equity Plans have been presented to Academic Senate and other shared governance bodies for input, discussion, and approval. There have also been several program reports to Academic Senate. Together, we can further explore ways of communication and reporting.

11. *How many counselors are there in our district? How are they funded?*

There are 26 counselors within Counseling Department: four in Petaluma and 22 in Santa Rosa (1 retirement pending and two recent retirements). These counselors are anchors or liaisons to many programs and departments such as CalWORKS, learning communities, CE programs, MESA, ESL, athletic teams, veterans, etc. Two of these 26 are funded by SWP and align their work with the needs of CE programs and students. Among the other 24 counselors, about 11 FTE are funded by SEA Program while the rest by general funds. In Petaluma, one general counselor is currently assigned 0.5 FTE to EOPS. The current SRJC counselor to student ratio is 693:1, higher than state average of 611:1.

EOPS has two counselor positions, and DRD has one. These positions are funded by respective categorical programs and serve these respective student populations.

The collective hard work of counselors and support staff has led to a remarkable achievement in academic planning for students. About 93% of non-exempt students at SRJC now have an education plan. This greatly helps students to complete their education goals.