

The De Anza College Faculty Mentoring Program: Fall 2008 Pilot Results

DRAFT, 2/24/09

This paper includes an overview of the Faculty Mentoring pilot program implemented at De Anza College in Fall 2008. The program was a Strategic Planning initiative supported by the Academic Senate. The program targeted first time De Anza students with the goal of increasing Fall to Winter persistence by having faculty members contact students to discuss academic discipline information. While only 9 faculty members ultimately participated, the results in terms of an increase in fall to winter persistence were promising, with 95% of contacted students persisting, compared with 71% for a similar group of students.

Research has suggested that early student integration into college life is an important factor for term to term persistence at community colleges (Karp, 2008). A student is more likely to stay and work towards their goal if they have made connections to the college either academically or socially. Other research shows that student-faculty relationships are important to a student's success in community college (McArthur, 2005). In 2006, a retention opportunity evaluation conducted by Noel Levitz indicated that both students and faculty members felt academic advising was important, but De Anza College needed to improve its services to promote student retention (Trites, 2006).

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), administered in Spring 2007, supports these findings for De Anza students -- many of them reported limited engagement with De Anza faculty:

- Out of 1,090 students responding to the question about how often you "talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor" 17% of students responded "often" or "very often", 45% replied "sometimes" and 38% replied "never".
- Out of 1,076 students responding to the question about how often you "worked with instructors on activities other than coursework" 6% of students responded "often" or "very often", 20% replied "sometimes" and 74% replied "never".

With this research in mind, faculty members were to reach out to students to educate them about career paths in their fields of expertise. Each student was meant to be linked to a faculty mentor by the major they selected on their application to De Anza College. Those students who had not selected a major would have faculty mentors inform them of general career planning methods and what to expect in the working world after graduation.

The program was voluntary – with faculty members volunteering their time and energy. While a budget was requested, no money was expended on the program. The program was implemented through the efforts of the planning committee and the faculty volunteers who were committed to student success.

Planning Chronology

The Faculty Mentoring program began in Fall 2008 after receiving approval from the Academic Senate as part of their Strategic Planning Commitments. The planning for the program involved two committee meetings and a presentation at the District/Senates Opening Day 2008. The timeline is as follows:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| Academic Senate Meeting: | February 25, 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First proposal made to begin faculty mentor program• Approval for the project by the Academic Senate• Committee formed to begin organization | |
| Faculty Mentoring Planning Committee meeting: | March 11, 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee discussed budget and money issues• Planned faculty recruiting• Discussed acquiring support from Deans | |
| Faculty Mentoring Planning Committee meeting: | April 15, 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee set a \$15,000 budget for the initial program• Planned to secure 25 volunteer faculty members• Planned training sessions for Spring 2008 | |
| Academic Senate Meeting: | April 21, 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee presented an update on the pilot to the Senate | |
| Faculty Mentor Fall Conference: | September 18, 2008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presented the program to faculty mentors• Requested feedback on the plans* | |

Program Participants

In Spring 2008, a planning committee organized a trial to start the Faculty Mentoring program. The faculty members were informed of the project and some volunteered for the pilot trial. Each faculty member received training in Fall 2008 in a District Opening Day session. Training differentiated between the roles of faculty mentors and counselors, and each faculty volunteer received a standardized script of what to discuss with each student. At the start of the program, there were 17 faculty mentors involved, and 5 students were to be assigned to each faculty mentor for a total of 85 possible students.

* See Appendix for minutes from the Academic Senate meetings, notes from committee meetings, and the full PowerPoint presentation from the Fall Conference

The students selected for the program were new students at De Anza who were considered at higher risk for not persisting based on persistence data from Fall 2006. The criteria for selection are outlined below Figure 1 on page 4. The criteria involved the use of six variables previously associated with lower persistence rates. Given the limited number of faculty involved, it was decided to focus on students attending three quarters or full time rather than those taking a smaller load.

Faculty attempted to make contact with their students during the 3rd and 4th weeks of the Fall 2008 quarter. At the end of the trial, only 9 faculty members had participated, attempting to make contact with 45 students, with “live” contact made with 23 students. Many faculty members had a hard time connecting with the students. Only about half of the students responded to the telephone or email contacts. At the beginning of the Winter 2009 quarter, the persistence of the students involved in the program was compared to the persistence of other students not involved in the program.

Faculty mentors involved in the trial were:

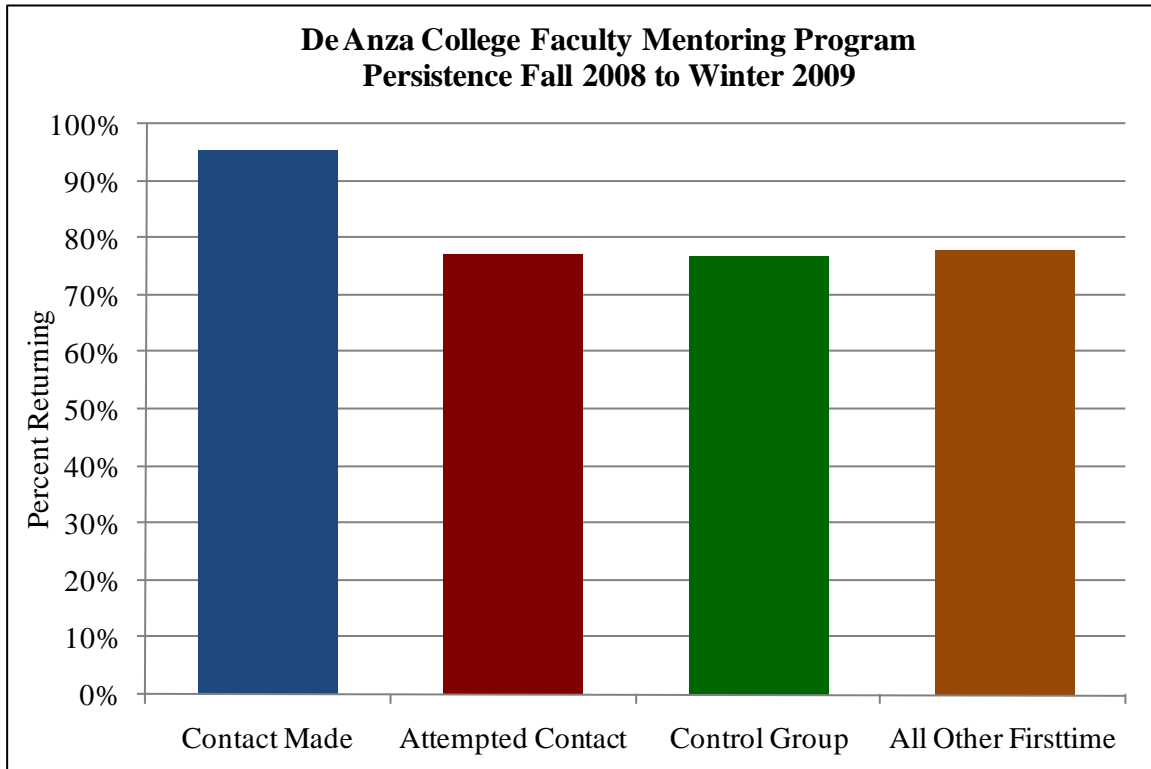
- Matt Abrahams - Speech
- Cassie Hanna - Nursing
- Lydia Hearn – Language Arts
- Mae Lee – Intercultural Studies
- Becky Roberts – Language Arts
- Dan Salah - Business
- Paul Setziol - Music
- Donna Stasio - Speech
- Wendy White - Humanities

Results: Persistence of Students into the Winter Quarter

The results of the program depicted below show a difference in persistence between students who were reached by faculty mentors (the student responded in some way, either in person, by phone, or by email) and other students. 95% of students selected for the Faculty Mentoring program that were contacted and reached by faculty mentors returned for the winter quarter. 77% of students who were contacted but did not respond returned for the winter quarter. 71% of students within the Faculty Mentoring program parameters who were not included in the program (i.e. “Control Group”) returned for the winter quarter. 78% of first time students with a goal of transfer, degree, or undecided returned for the winter quarter.

The small size of the program (9 faculty / 45 students) makes it difficult to form any strong opinions about the link between student persistence and faculty mentoring. It is possible that the students who responded to the faculty contact were more driven to succeed in the first place, while those who did not respond were less motivated. It may also be possible that the majors selected by the students impacted the results. Still, it is interesting that of the 205 students meeting criteria using 6 variables, nearly all of the 23 students contacted and responding to faculty returned for the winter term.

Figure 1



Persistence from Fall 2008 to Winter 2009

Group	Number of Students	Percent Returning	Number of Students	Not Returning	Number of Students	Total
Contact Made	22	96%	1	4%	23	100%
Attempted Contact	17	77%	5	23%	22	100%
Control Group	113	71%	47	29%	160	100%
All Other Firsttime	3,851	78%	1,084	22%	4,935	100%

Notes

Criteria used to select students for the faculty mentoring program:

- Goal of transfer, degree, or undecided
- First time to college and first time to De Anza
- Enrolled full time or three quarters time
- Not receiving financial aid
- Had not taken counseling 100
- African American, Native American, Latino, Filipino, Pacific Islander, other non-White

Criteria for All Other Firsttime students:

- First time De Anza College student
- Goal of transfer, degree, or undecided

Suggestions for Program Improvement

After the trial program finished, faculty members involved in the program provided feedback about the program. One problem identified was that it was very difficult for the faculty to make contact with the student. Many students who were called or e-mailed never replied. Another problem that arose was that the calls were “awkward.” Many students were confused about the program and didn’t have any preparation for the contact. This led to the conversations being uncomfortable for both parties. Once the faculty mentor had contacted the student, it was very difficult to get them to meet in person, so the majority of the mentoring was done through phone conversations or e-mail. Suggestions to solve these problems included letting the students either choose to be in the program, or informing them ahead of time that a member of the faculty may be contacting them.

Conclusions

The persistence data suggests there are positive benefits to having faculty reach out to students in their first quarter. The students included in the pilot were all from traditionally underserved populations that historically have had lower persistence rates than other groups. While attending more than half time is strongly associated with student success and persistence, the results here – of randomly selected students – suggest it is possible to increase fall to winter persistence rates for De Anza College students into the 90% range.

References

- Karp, M., & Hughes, K. (2008, Winter2008). Information networks and integration: Institutional influences on experiences and persistence of beginning students. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2008(144), 73-82. Retrieved February 17, 2009, from Academic Search Premier database.
- McArthur, R. (2005, Spring2005). Faculty -- Based Advising: An Important Factor in Community College Retention. *Community College Review*, 32(4), 1-19. Retrieved February 17, 2009, from Academic Search Premier database.
- Noel-Levitz. (2006). *Retention Opportunities Analysis* [Presentation]. Cupertino, CA: David Trites.

Appendix

Academic Senate Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2008

IV. Faculty Mentoring Program: LaManque distributed a handout explaining and promoting a kind of pilot faculty mentoring of students plan. The document's title, "De Anza College Academic Senate Strategic Planning Commitments Related to Faculty Mentoring", reminded the group that the idea had already been approved at least in general terms. Response to the presentation was entirely positive. LaManque sought volunteers to join him on a planning committee. Argyriou and Setziol volunteered. Non Senators are also welcome to join.

April 21, 2008

VI. Faculty Mentoring: LaManque presented an update on the status of the effort. His presentation primarily consisted of an introduction to the basic aspects of the initiative, the fact that this pilot is intended to involve a target number of 25 faculty members and 150 or so students, the fact that no stipend is planned for the pilot phase, and a request for more faculty volunteers.

De Anza College Academic Senate Strategic Planning Commitments Related to Faculty Mentoring

1. Provide faculty advising for students grouped in cohorts (e.g. discipline-areas, clusters of courses). While counselors and academic advisers provide expert advising for a student's academic and personal concerns, faculty can provide advising in their area of expertise-disciplines and careers.

2 Also, students who have not yet selected a major can receive more general educational advising such as the culture of post-graduate education and the process of career planning. Students who do not have transfer as an objective (e.g. students who are interested in a certificate or who are retraining) would also benefit from faculty advising because they can learn of similar careers to those in which they currently have an interest.

By providing career and discipline advising for students, faculty can encourage students to explore disciplines further and can facilitate interest in respective disciplines.

In addition to providing career advising for all students, faculty advisers could specifically target students from underserved populations, especially in areas that do not historically provide access to such students. Students from such populations will have personal contact with a faculty member who might serve as a mentor for that student.

Faculty advising would coordinate with other services and programs on campus (e.g. counseling, career center, DSPP, EDC) to cover any gaps that might currently exist. With limited resources for many of these programs, faculty advisers are needed to help maintain the contact with many of these students, which will lead to better retention.

A Proposal for a De Anza College Faculty Mentoring Program
(In Support of the Academic Senate's Strategic Planning Commitments)
Draft, February 26, 2007

Purpose:

To have 2 personal conversations with 1,000 new students with a goal of transfer, degree or undecided in Fall 2008, most at-risk of not returning in Winter 2009.

Goal:

Have 65% of the students (up from 45%) involved return in Winter 2009.

How:

Recruit 100 full and part time faculty members to have conversations with 10 students each about their academic careers at De Anza College during the 3rd and 8th week of the quarter.

Students will be given the contact information of their mentors in advance.

Students will be assigned faculty mentors teaching in the students' selected major where possible.

Training:

A Fall Conference (2008) will be held the 2nd week of classes as a "kick off" event to raise faculty and student interest. Students (particularly at-risk students) will be invited to come to a panel of alum. The event would include tables of the different majors/disciplines/departments, with food, etc. The 1,000 students would be able to make contact with a mentor at that time so that the follow up later in the quarter would be more likely.

Faculty members will be trained in Spring 2008. The training will consist of a review of college resources and include a standard script for the discussion. Training will also include information to help faculty achieve greater cultural proficiency. An important component of the training will include the faculty mentors role as compared to that of a counselor or academic advisor.

Cost:

Faculty will be paid an estimated \$50 per hour and / or given PAA credit. It is expected that each conversation will be 15 minutes for a total of 30 minutes per student over the course of the quarter. Each faculty member participating will be given 5 hrs pay or PAA credit at the completion of the quarter after turning in signed attendance sheets from students.

5 hours times 100 is 500 hours or \$25,000 to reach out to 1,000 students.
Additional cost for training and organizing might be \$5,000.

Feedback: 1) Does the Academic Senate think the idea should be pursued? 2) Is anyone interested in serving on a planning committee?
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**Fall to Winter Persistence of Fall 2006 First Time to De Anza Students
with a Goal of Transfer, Award, or Undecided**
(An Example of How Data Can Be Used to Focus Faculty Mentoring Efforts)

- For Fall 2006, of the 4,649 new students that indicated a goal of transfer, award, or undecided, 1,099 or 25% did not return in the winter.
- 73% of the students not returning for winter (797 / 1,099) had selected a major.
- 55% (603 / 1,099) did not attend COUN100, were less than full time, and had previously attended another college before coming to De Anza -- compared with 15% for students that returned.

					Headcount
Did Not Return in Winter	No COUN100	Less than Full Time	previous college experience	Major Selected	466
				Undecided Major	137
				Total	603
			no previous college experience	Major Selected	126
				Undecided Major	75
		Total	201		
		Full time	previous college experience	Major Selected	50
				Undecided Major	18
				Total	68
			no previous college experience	Major Selected	26
	Undecided Major			14	
	Total	40			
	Total	108			
	Total	912			
	Yes COUN100	Less than Full Time	previous college experience	Major Selected	19
				Undecided Major	3
				Total	22
			no previous college experience	Major Selected	65
				Undecided Major	34
		Total	99		
Total		121			
Full time		previous college experience	Major Selected	11	
			Undecided Major	4	
			Total	15	
	no previous college experience	Major Selected	34		
		Undecided Major	17		
Total	51				
Total	66				
Total	187				
Total	1,099				

Faculty Mentoring Planning Committee
April 15, 2008, 3:30pm

Attending:

Andrew LaManque, Anne Argyriou, Lydia Hearn, Paul Setziol

Current Planning:

By the end of April, obtain commitments from 25 fulltime faculty to volunteer for the pilot. We will start with a small group on a volunteer basis and address compensation issues as the pilot expands next year.

At the end of April / early May, email the volunteers to get feedback on attendance at one of two training workshops (1-2 hrs) to be held at the end of May / early June. Lydia will work on a training outline that will likely include Cindy Lester from Career Services.

Sometime in the first few weeks of the fall quarter we will invite faculty and students to an orientation session. Given 25 faculty, we will likely invite 150-200 students to the session with faculty responsible for contacting all the students on their list after the session. The students invited will be considered at a higher risk of not completing their students at De Anza. The exact methodology will be worked out at a later date. We will likely include continuing as well as new students.

Andrew will send committee members the number of students by major in spring 2008.

Andrew will request a budget of \$15,000 to cover food and postage costs.

Paul gave La Voz reporter Shabnam Mahmoudkhan an interview on April 14. Andrew gave this quote:

“The mentoring program, involving faculty reaching out to students in the major, will provide an opportunity for more students to learn about an academic discipline or career. We hope that this contact and learning experience will result in a higher percentage of students staying at De Anza to complete their goals.”
Andrew LaManque, Ph.D., Parttime Instructor, Economics.

Next meeting Wednesday, April 30, 2008, 3pm
<http://www.whodouwant2b.com/>

Faculty Mentoring Planning Committee
March 11, 2008, 2pm

Attending:

Andrew LaManque
Anne Argyriou
Lydia Hearn
Paul Setziol
Melinda Hughes

Agenda

- 1) Ideas on how to recruit faculty to be mentors. Initially each member will reach out to faculty to see how easy (or hard) it is to get commitments of interest. This list will be shared at the next meeting.
- 2) How do we include activities already going on in various departments? It was agreed that we would try to conduct a short survey to faculty to attempt to catalog the activities and also advertise the program. Andrew agreed to put a draft together for the next meeting.
- 3) Dates / content / personnel for spring training (should we bring in Staff Dev)? Tentative date is sometime in May. Anne and Lydia will put together some ideas. Should include role of counselors versus faculty career advising, cultural competency, etc.
- 4) Other groups to brief - Deans, College Council, FA?? Sometime in the next several weeks should look for support from Deans, Counseling, Career Center, etc. Andrew will ask Christina about load questions (especially for part timers) and pay. Andrew will contact Cindy Lester about her involvement.
- 5) Money issues - checking on what can be paid and how. (see #4)
- 6) Developing a budget proposal for Brian. We can do this in May when we have a better idea of faculty involvement.
- 7) Fall planning. Lydia will begin thinking about this.
- 8) Others ? Perhaps discuss with La Voz writer Shabnam Mahmoudkhan.

Next Meeting March 25 at 3pm