



# California State University San Marcos TRIO Student Support Services Program Evaluation

Report prepared by

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The TRIO Student Support Services Program at California State University San Marcos offers personal, transitional, and academic support to students from first-generation, low-income, and disability backgrounds, enabling them to persist and graduate from Cal State San Marcos. The project evaluation aims to assess SSSP participants' experiences of program services; their relationships with SSSP staff, fellow students, and faculty; their perceptions of the effectiveness of SSSP in helping them achieve their educational goals; and their perceptions of the supportiveness of the overall CSUSM institutional climate.



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## INTRODUCTION

TRIO at California State University San Marcos conducted a comprehensive evaluation to track and monitor completion of the project's identified needs, objectives, and plan of operation. The program evaluation incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The National Latino Research Center (NLRC) was contracted to carry out the external evaluation including the qualitative portion of the TRIO evaluation along with some quantitative elements. The NLRC is a research institute promoting scientific research, training, and dissemination of information on Latino populations in the United States. The NLRC's evaluation of TRIO utilized a qualitative research model consisting of semi-structured surveys and focus groups with program participants. Using a reliable and culturally-sensitive approach, the research design gathered measurable baseline and process data. The first phase of the program evaluation focused on gathering qualitative data. The qualitative evaluation provided descriptive and narrative data via a semi-structured survey. This qualitative data effectively assesses participants' experiences with program services; their relationships with program staff, fellow students, and faculty; their perceptions of the effectiveness of TRIO in helping them achieve their educational goals; and their perceptions of the supportiveness of the overall institutional climate. The results of the semi-structured survey will help to inform the scope of focus groups, to be conducted in phase two of the evaluation plan.

The evaluation is designed to involve a pre- and post-test administration of semi-structured surveys and focus groups/interviews with at least 50% of program participants. In the first phase of data collection, the survey results will provide a qualitative description of student's perceptions of the program services, program staff, and the institutional climate. The third (post-test) phase of the study will consist of surveys to



help TRIO program to assess change in the student's perceptions of services, staff, and institutional climate. This report summarizes the survey results collected in Fall 2010 and focus group results collected in Spring 2011.

## BACKGROUND

The TRIO Evaluation is the result of a partnership between TRIO and the National Latino Research Center promoting educational equity and serving underrepresented students at California State University San Marcos.

### ***California State University San Marcos***



California State University San Marcos was founded in 1989 when Governor George Deukmejian signed legislative action into law, making CSUSM the first of a new generation of Cal State campuses and the first totally new campus in the U.S. in more than two decades. Its creation resulted from more than 20 years of work by business and civic leaders who understood how important a university campus could be to the region. Today, the campus is the higher education leader in northern San Diego County, fostering quality of life through lifelong personal growth and sustainable community development.

CSUSM has an enrollment of nearly 9700 students and offers 30 bachelor's degrees, 11 graduate programs including teaching credentialing programs. In the spring of 2011, 62% of the students were female and 38% were male. The CSUSM student body (based on fall 2011 enrollment) is ethnically diverse with 3% African American, 11% Asian/Pacific Islanders, 26% Hispanic/Latino, 47% White/Caucasian, and 10% other (2% declined to respond).



An academic blueprint has been developed to guide creation of new programs to serve the higher education needs of the area. The number of faculty has increased from the original 12 to 230 full-time tenured (and tenured track). Men's and women's athletic teams in golf, cross country and track have been added and dozens of student clubs and activities are available.

The university focuses on the student as an active participant in the learning process in the classroom as well as in the community. Students work closely with a faculty of active scholars and artists whose commitment to sustained excellence in teaching, research, and community partnership enhances student learning. The university offers rigorous undergraduate and graduate programs distinguished by exemplary teaching, innovative curricula, a strong writing requirement, and the application of new technologies. CSUSM provides a range of services that respond to the needs of a student body with diverse backgrounds, expanding student access to an excellent and affordable education.

As a public university, CSUSM grounds its mission in the public trust, alignment with regional needs, and sustained enrichment of the intellectual, civic, economic, and cultural life of our region and state ([http://www.csusm.edu/mission\\_statement030700.htm](http://www.csusm.edu/mission_statement030700.htm)). This vision is reflected in the university's five strategic priorities: (1) *academic excellence*, (2) a *student life* that is rich, welcoming, and inclusive, (3) a *campus climate* of camaraderie, mutual respect, and trust, (4) the desire to strengthen and further expand our local, national, and international *community partnerships*, and (5) *educational equity*, respecting and modeling the diversity of our region within a context of social justice (<http://www.csusm.edu/plan/strategicpriorities.htm>).



CSUSM achieved Hispanic Serving Institutions Program eligibility in Spring 2011 and TRIO continues to be one of the key support programs on campus contributing to student retention and graduation.

### ***National Latino Research Center***



The National Latino Research Center (NLRC) is under the auspices of CSUSM's Office of Research and Sponsored Projects. The Associate Vice President for Research serves as the authorized organizational representative overseeing the responsible implementation of research and sponsored programs, including the university's centers and institutes.

The NLRC was founded in 1998 with the mission of promoting research, training, and the exchange of information related to Latino and under-served populations in the U.S. As a multi-disciplinary unit of Cal State San Marcos, the NLRC brings together faculty and professional staff who possess a broad range of research and program experience.

Specializing in applied research, the NLRC is uniquely positioned to bring together key stakeholders from the community, government, NGO sector, and private industry to identify solutions and develop strategies to address local and regional challenges. NLRC's research focus is in the areas of education, cultural competency, health, environmental issues, public policy, and community development. NLRC conducts program evaluations, needs assessments and population studies for community-based organizations and public agencies in a broad range of fields. In addition to research projects, the NLRC provides technical assistance to a range of organizations and actively supports multi-agency collaborations that seek to leverage resources and expertise. For additional information about the NLRC visit their website at <http://www.csusm.edu/nlrc/>.



## Student Support Services



The TRIO program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The program has been hosted at Cal States San Marcos since 1993. It currently supports 192 students from first-generation, low-income, and/or disability backgrounds, who are U.S. citizens or legal residents, qualify and applied for federal financial aid, and have evidence of academic need.

TRIO provides services to increase retention and graduation rates of targeted students. By collaborating with other service departments on campus such as Educational Opportunity Program, students receive targeted outreach to maximize their success in higher education. The services provided to students include:

<b>TRIO SERVICES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES</b>
<b>Annual Recognition Ceremony</b>	Each spring, graduating TRiO SSS students and their families are honored at a ceremony preceding University commencement. The TRiO Senior Excellence Award recipient – selected for academic achievement, campus leadership, and commitment to the SSS program – is recognized.
<b>The Center</b>	TRiO SSS students may utilize The Center, a multi-purpose computer lab, study area, and community building space. Limited amounts of free printing and copies are available at The Center.
<b>Cultural Enrichment Activities</b>	A limited number of co-curricular events and activities (plays, lectures, musical performances, museum exhibitions) are available each year to SSS students, with the intent of increasing cultural awareness and building community among SSS participants. University credit may be available with participation.





<b>Counseling</b>	Students work with counselors to develop an educational plan, which includes both short-range academic goals and long-range graduation planning. Counselors assist students in exploring majors, academic success strategies, and personal matters which impact their academic performance.
<b>Summer Transitional Enhancement Program (STEP)</b>	This first-year program is offered to students prior to their first semester of attendance at CSUSM in order to help them solidify a community, and provide a foundation for success in the structured first-year experience for TRiO SSS participants.
<b>Financial Literacy</b>	TRiO SSS staff offers financial literacy workshops to its program participants, covering such things as budgeting, managing credit and making a savings plan.
<b>Graduate School Preparation</b>	Students are encouraged to pursue graduate and professional school opportunities through participation in graduate school fairs and workshops addressing graduate school preparation strategies. Counselors provide students with assistance in writing personal statements and letters of recommendation.
<b>Laptop Loans</b>	A limited number of laptop computers are available for TRiO SSS students who do not have computer access at home.
<b>Mid-Semester Evaluations/Early Interventions</b>	Faculty are encouraged to complete mid-semester progress reports for TRiO SSS students each semester. Students who are having academic or other difficulties meet with a counselor to identify appropriate interventions to increase their likelihood of success in the course(s) of concern. First-Year students receive additional early intervention strategies and services.
<b>Mentoring</b>	Peer mentors provide general academic information and assist students in becoming active members and leaders in the campus community. Faculty mentors, available to upper-division students, encourage academic inquiry and mentor students



	wishing to pursue graduate and professional degrees.
<b>Priority Registration</b>	Students in TRiO SSS receive first selection of classes each semester.
<b>Supplemental Grant Aid</b>	First and Second Year TRiO SSS students who are financially eligible, as determined in collaboration with the Financial Aid office, may receive supplemental SSS grants during their first and second years of college enrollment. Students must have a current FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) on file to be eligible.
<b>Academic Tutoring</b>	We offer our students one-to-one tutoring in English, English as a Second Language, and writing. Students who are struggling in any of the above mentioned areas can contact the program tutor for help. Tutorials are conducted in three ways, in person, by e-mail and phone. TRiO SSS program tutors are professionally trained and gain certification through accredited tutor programs.
<b>Workshops</b>	A diverse range of workshops provides students with opportunities for academic and personal development. Topics, which vary each semester in response to student requests, have included time management, library research strategies, making campus connections, managing stress, financial literacy and diversity awareness.
<p>For additional information about TRiO SSS, visit their website at <a href="http://www.csusm.edu/SSS_EOP/SSS/">http://www.csusm.edu/SSS_EOP/SSS/</a>.</p>	



### *Sample*

A comprehensive list of current TRiO SSS students was compiled by SSS staff ( $N=192$ ) and provided to NLRC researchers. All of the listed students were sent an initial email requesting participation in the program evaluation. The notification email advised students of the study and directed them to a web site to complete the survey. Of the 192 students contacted via email, a total of 79 students completed the survey (response rate of 41.1%).

### *Materials*

#### **Demographics**

Student respondents were asked to respond to a number of demographic questions. Students were asked about their current academic standing, age group, gender, racial / ethnic status, and the year they started at CSUSM.

#### **Attitude, Perception, and Frequency**

After completing the demographics section of the survey, students were asked a series of questions covering three main topics. The survey questions asked students to report on their attitude about and perceptions of



the 'institutional climate', the 'SSS staff members' and 'SSS services' they received at CSUSM. Students were asked to respond to two types of questions. First, they were asked to respond to 'attitude' and 'perception' questions in a Likert type format options, e.g., 'Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', 'Neutral', 'Agree', and 'Strongly Disagree'. Second, students were asked to respond to 'frequency of use' questions in a Likert-type format ranging from 'Frequently', 'Occasionally', 'Rarely' and 'Never'.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Below is a summary of survey findings including demographics, perceptions of institutional and campus classroom climate, TRiO SSS staff members, and services.

### ***Demographics***

The total of 79 students completed the online survey. The sample consisted of college Seniors (44.3%), Juniors (29.1%), Sophomores (17.7%), and a few 'First Year Students' (8.9%).

#### *Age*

Students indicated a categorical age range from "17 to 20" to "40 or older." Students aged '21 to 25' were the largest subgroup (44.7%), followed by students aged '17 to 20' (36.7%), '26 to 40' (9.2%), '31 to 40' (6.6%), and '41 years of age or older' (1.3%). Furthermore, the sample comprised mostly female students (75.9%), and fewer male (22.8%) and no transgender (0.0%) students.



### *Race/Ethnicity*

The racial or ethnic status of the sample revealed a high number of 'Hispanic/Latinos' (64.6%), 'Whites/Caucasian' (8.9%), African American/Black (7.6%), 'More than one race' (5.1%), 'Other' race (8.9%), Asians (2.5%), and no Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders (0.0%). Finally, the majority of the respondents began at CSUSM 'First year students' (61.5%) compared to 'Transfer' students (38.5%).

### ***Institutional Climate***

Students were asked to evaluate the "institutional climate" at CSUSM on a scale ranging from 1 = 'Strongly Disagree', 2 = 'Disagree', 3 = 'Neutral', 4 = 'Agree', to 5 = 'Strongly Disagree' or a scale ranging from 1 = 'Strongly Disagree', 2 = 'Disagree', 4 = 'Agree', to 5 = 'Strongly Disagree'.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the students rated CSUSM's institutional climate favorably ( $M=4.09$ ,  $SD=.93$ ,  $N=74$ ). Students reported that the 'SSS Learning Community professors' were sensitive to their needs ( $M=3.37$ ,  $SD=1.44$ ,  $N=59$ ) and that they 'felt comfortable' expressing ideas in the CSUSM classroom environment ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=1.14$ ,  $N=73$ ). Similarly, on average, respondents felt favorably about CSUSM professors understanding their unique needs ( $M=3.59$ ,  $SD=1.25$ ,  $N=74$ ).

### ***TRiO SSS Staff Members***

Students were asked to report on their experiences and perceptions of TRiO SSS staff members. Overall, the students rated their interactions and experiences with SSS Staff members very favorably ( $M=4.59$ ,  $SD=.74$ ,  $N=79$ ). The students perceived the SSS staff as being knowledgeable about university requirements ( $M=4.54$ ,  $SD=.66$ ,  $N=79$ ) and campus resources

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<sup>1</sup> note that option "Neutral" was not offered for some questions



( $M=4.56$ ,  $SD=.64$ ,  $N=79$ ). Furthermore, students perceived the SSS staff as being understanding ( $M=4.48$ ,  $SD=.83$ ,  $N=79$ ) and sensitive to their unique needs ( $M=4.52$ ,  $SD=.75$ ,  $N=79$ ).

### **TRiO SSS Services**

The majority of the survey asked students to rate their perceptions and experiences with specific aspects of the program. Overall, students expressed favorable attitudes toward SSS services they have received. The students reported positive perceptions of specific aspects of SSS services ranging from helping them to pass entry level requirements” to learning about persons from diverse backgrounds (See [Table 1](#)). Additionally, students perceive that the SSS program encouraged them to become involved in diverse campus or civic activities ( $M=3.82$ ,  $SD=.90$ ,  $N=79$ ).

<b>Table 1: TRiO SSS Services</b>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
helped clarify and achieve Personal goals	4.39	.78	79
helped clarify and achieve Academic goals	4.33	.84	79
helped maintain a good GPA	4.18	.89	79
helped persist toward graduation	4.35	.87	79
encouraged the sharing of ideas	3.88	.90	79
offered at convenient times	4.28	.96	79
helped students learn about people of diverse backgrounds	3.77	.97	79
helped complete CSUSM entry level math requirement	4.04	.88	50
helped complete CSUSM entry level writing requirement	4.14	.80	51



Students were also asked to report on the 'most helpful' aspects of their experience with TRiO SSS services. The students responses were tallied and ranked from the most to least frequently occurring responses (see Table 2). The students ranked 'Counseling / Advising' and "Priority Registration" as the most helpful services provided by the program staff. Conversely, the lowest ranked service was "Supplemental Instruction".

<b>Table 2: Rank Order of 'Most Helpful aspects of SSS'</b>	
<b>Most Helpful Aspect of SSS</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Counseling / Advising	1
Priority Registration	2
Mid-Semester Evaluations	3
The Center	4
Mentoring	5
Supplemental Grant Aid	5
Cultural Enrichment Activities / Fieldtrips	7
Workshops	8
Laptop Loans	9
Advocacy	9

### ***Financial Literacy***

A new indicator introduced in this year's survey is financial literacy. In general the majority of the students (78.4%) reported being concerned with accumulation of excessive debt from educational expenses and worry about not being able to pay off their loans when they graduate. Although the majority (60.3%) reported a necessity to borrow loans for college and know the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans, 51.4% of the



students indicated needing more information and/or guidance to help them manage their finances. Half of the students currently have financial aid yet cannot make ends meet. The findings suggest students would greatly benefit from having more guidance to help them understand financial systems and how to manage personal finances.

### **Summary**

The results of the semi-structured survey reveal that on average, students are satisfied with the SSS staff, SSS services and the institutional climate at CSUSM. The survey also helped to identify a few areas for further review and evaluation. Additionally, students reported several issues for future review and consideration. For example, students reported a relatively lower rating for the CSUSM professors understanding their unique needs. There were no open-ended questions within the 'institutional climate' section of the survey which might be useful to consider for future surveys. Secondly, the students did not perceive that the SSS program was actively encouraging them to become involved in diverse campus or civic activities. The SSS staff may consider formalizing strategies for getting students to become more engaged in campus or civic activities.

It is evident from student responses that they value TRiO SSS services and utilize them frequently. Most importantly, SSS students attribute SSS staff, programs and services with helping them to clarify and achieve personal goals, to stay in school, and achieve academic goals. The SSS program is achieving its mission of providing services that support student retention and graduation at CSUSM.





## SURVEY RESPONSES SUMMARY

### TRiO SSS Student Evaluation Responses Summary FY 2010-2011

Total # of SSSP participants:192  
Total # of survey invitation email sent:192  
# of respondents attempted:92  
# of respondents *consented*:89  
(# of respondents *declined*):3  
# of respondents completed:79\* (*n* of our analysis)  
\*3 respondents started but withdrew after completing at least half the survey questions

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#### **INFORMED CONSENT:**

**Participation in this study is voluntary and all responses are confidential. If I agree to participate in this study, I can choose not to answer any question or stop at any time. I am providing my consent to participate by selecting "Accept" below or I may choose not to participate by selecting "Decline."**

Accept  Decline (q001)

**2. ID number (q002):** \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: Please read each question below and select the most appropriate response.*

#### ***I. STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS***

**3. Current class level (q003)**

Freshman (8.9%)  Sophomore (17.7%)  Junior (29.1%)  Senior (44.3%)

***n=79, mean=3.09, SD=0.99***

**4. Age Enter actual age (q004):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mean=22.80, SD=5.269 and *n=76* (min=18; max=51), missing=3**

**5. Gender (q005)**

Female (75.9%)  Male (22.8%)  Transgender (0.0%)



**n=78: missing=1**

**6. How do you identify your racial/ethnic heritage? (q006)**

American Indian or Alaskan Native (**2.5%**)  Asian (**2.5%**)  Black or African American (**7.6%**)  Hispanic or Latino (**64.6%**)  White (**8.9%**)  
 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (**0.0%**)  More than one race (**5.1%**)  
 Other (**8.9%**): \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify) **n=79**

**Other included: Anglo-Saxon, Chicano Mexican-American, Creole, Human, Mexican American, Mexican-American, Middle Eastern and Syrian**

**7. Enter 1st year of enrollment at Cal State San Marcos (q007): \_\_\_\_\_**

**2003:2.5%**  
**2005:2.5%**  
**2006:5.1%**  
**2007:17.7%**  
**2008:16.5%**  
**2009:30.4%**  
**2010:20.3%**

**(n=75, missing=4)**

**8. I started at Cal State San Marcos as a (q008):**

First Year Student (**61.5%**)  Transfer student (**38.5%**)  
**n=78, missing=1**

**9. I started the SSS program as a (q009):**

First Year Student (**60.8%**)  Transfer Student (**38.0%**)  Continuing Student (**1.3%**) **n=79**

**II. ABOUT SSS STAFF**

**10. SSS staff members are knowledgeable about university requirements (q010)**

Strongly Agree (**62.0%**)  Agree (**31.6%**)  Neutral (**5.1%**)  Disagree (**1.3%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**0.0%**)



***n=79, mean=4.54, sd=0.656***

**11. SSS staff members are knowledgeable about campus resources (q011)**

Strongly Agree (**63.2%**)  Agree (**29.1%**)  Neutral (**7.6%**)  Disagree (**0.0%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**0.0%**)  
***n=79, mean=4.56, sd=0.635***

**12. I feel that I can trust the SSS staff members with whom I have interacted (q012)**

Strongly Agree (**69.6%**)  Agree (**24.1%**)  Neutral (**3.8%**)  Disagree (**1.3%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**1.3%**)  
***n=79, mean=4.59, sd=0.743***

**13. During my interactions with SSS staff members, I feel they understand me (q013)**

Strongly Agree (**63.3%**)  Agree (**26.6%**)  Neutral (**6.3%**)  Disagree (**2.5%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**1.3%**)  
***n=79, mean=4.48, sd=0.830***

**14. SSS staff members demonstrate sensitivity to my unique needs as a student from a first-generation, low-income, and/or disability background (q014)**

Strongly Agree (**63.3%**)  Agree (**27.8%**)  Neutral (**7.6%**)  Disagree (**0.0%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**1.3%**)  
***n=79, mean=4.52, sd=0.749***

**15. Describe how SSS staff members demonstrate sensitivity to my unique needs as a student from a first-generation, low-income, and/or disability background.---open ended (q015)**

(See the Appendix I)

**III. SSS RESOURCES**

**16. SSS services have helped me...**



**16.1 clarify how I can reach my educational goals (q016\_0001)**

Strongly Agree (51.9%)  Agree (39.2%)  Neutral (6.3%)  Disagree (1.3%)  
 Strongly Disagree (1.3%)  
**n=79, mean=4.39, sd=0.775**

**16.2 clarify how I can reach my personal goals (q016\_0002)**

Strongly Agree (51.9%)  Agree (32.9%)  Neutral (12.7%)  Disagree (1.3%)  
 Strongly Disagree (1.3%)  
**n=79, mean=4.33, sd=0.843**

**16.3 to maintain good grades / GPA at Cal State San Marcos (q016\_0003)**

Strongly Agree (43.0%)  Agree (36.7%)  Neutral (16.5%)  Disagree (2.5%)  
 Strongly Disagree (1.3%)  
**n=79, mean=4.18, sd=0.888**

**16.4 persist toward graduation (q016\_0004)**

Strongly Agree (55.8%)  Agree (27.3%)  Neutral (14.3%)  Disagree (1.3%)  
 Strongly Disagree (1.3%)  
**n=77, mean=4.35, sd=0.870**

**16.5 SSS services are offered at times / days that are convenient for me (q016\_0005).**

Strongly Agree (53.2%)  Agree (29.1%)  Neutral (12.7%)  Disagree (2.5%)  
 Strongly Disagree (2.5%)  
**n=79, mean=4.28, sd=0.960**

**17. SSS services have helped me...**

**successfully complete the entry-level writing requirement (q017\_0001 & q017\_0002)**

**17.1 (Math 15, 50 and/or 51 for first-year students) n=50**



Strongly Agree (**38.0%**)  Agree (**30.0%**)  Neutral (**30.0%**)  Disagree (**2.0%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**0.0%**)  
**n=50, mean=4.04, sd=0.880**

**17.2 (GEW 101 and/or GEW 50 for first-year students) n=51**  
 Strongly Agree (**39.2%**)  Agree (**35.3%**)  Neutral (**25.5%**)  Disagree (**0.0%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**0.0%**)  
**n=51, mean=4.14, sd=0.800**

**18. SSS services which have been most helpful to me are (please select your top 5 choices):**

- 74** Advising and Counseling (academic and/or personal) (**q018\_0001**)
- 13** Advocacy with other departments on campus (**q018\_0002**)
- 17** Cultural Enrichment Activities (**q018\_0003**)
- 12** Early Intervention (**q018\_0004**)
- 8** Graduate School Preparation (**q018\_0005**)
- 13** Laptop Loans (**q018\_0006**)
- 4** Learning Community (**q018\_0007**)
- 40** Mid-Semester Evaluations (**q018\_0008**)
- 22** Mentoring (peer and/or faculty) (**q018\_0009**)
- 11** One Unit Class (**q018\_0010**)
- 70** Priority Registration (**q018\_0011**)
- 12** Summer Transition Enhancement Program (**q018\_0012**)
- 22** Supplemental Grant Aid (**q018\_0013**)
- 1** Supplemental Instruction (**q018\_0014**)
- 39** The Center (computer lab, study area, printing, copying) (**q018\_0015**)
- 7** TRiO Day / Community Service Project (**q018\_0016**)
- 12** Tutoring (**q018\_0017**)
- 16** Workshops (academic and/or personal development) (**q018\_0018**)
- 2** Other (**q018\_0019**)

**19. I would rate my level of involvement in SSS services as (q019):**

Low – Use SSS services 2 or fewer times per semester(**20.5%**)  
 Moderate – Use SSS services an average of 1-2 times per month(**41.0%**)  
 High – Use SSS services at least weekly(**38.5%**)  
**n=78, mean=2.18, sd=0.752**



**20. I would like to be more involved with SSS services (q020)**

Strongly Agree (**30.4%**)  Agree (**41.8%**)  Neutral (**22.8%**)  Disagree (**3.8%**)

Strongly Disagree (**1.3%**)

**n=79, mean=3.96, sd=0.898**

**21. Please specify how you would like to be involved or other services you would like SSS to provide: (q021)**

#### **IV. INCLUSIVENESS & DIVERSITY**

**22. SSS services have helped me learn about people who are from backgrounds different than my own (i.e., race, ethnicity, culture, economic class, gender, and/or sexual orientation). (q022)**

Strongly Agree (**26.9%**)  Agree (**32.1%**)  Neutral (**33.3%**)  Disagree (**6.4%**)

Strongly Disagree (**1.3%**)

**n=78, mean=3.77, sd=0.966**

**23. SSS services have encouraged or challenged me to get more involved in diverse campus and/or community activities. (q023)**

Strongly Agree (**25.6%**)  Agree (**38.5%**)  Neutral (**30.8%**)  Disagree (**3.8%**)

Strongly Disagree (**1.3%**)

**n=78, mean=3.82, sd=0.903**

**24. When participating in SSS services, I can offer my ideas should I choose to share them. (q024)**

Strongly Agree (**24.7%**)  Agree (**42.9%**)  Neutral (**29.9%**)  Disagree (**1.3%**)

Strongly Disagree (**1.3%**)

**n=77, mean=3.88, sd=0.843**

**25. SSS services have encouraged or challenged me to get more involved in diverse campus and/or community activities. (q027)**

Strongly Agree (**12.0%**)  Agree (**52.0%**)  Disagree (**20.0%**)  Strongly Disagree (**16.0%**)

**n=75, mean=3.24, sd=1.34**



**26. When participating in SSS services, I can offer my ideas should I choose to share them. (q028)**

Strongly Agree (15.8%)  Agree (56.6%)  Disagree (11.8%)  Strongly Disagree (15.8%)  
**n=76, mean=3.45, sd=1.33**

**27. SSS services are offered at times / days that are convenient for me. (p029)**

Strongly Agree (22.1%)  Agree (49.4%)  Disagree (13.0%)  Strongly Disagree (15.6%)  
**n=77, mean=3.49, sd=1.38**

**28. SSS Learning Community professors demonstrate sensitivity to my unique needs as a student from a first-generation, low-income, and/or disability background. (q030)**

Strongly Agree (14.3%)  Agree (39.0%)  Disagree (7.8%)  Strongly Disagree (15.6%)  
**n=59, mean=3.37, sd=1.44**

**29. SSS ONE UNIT Professors demonstrate sensitivity to my unique needs as a student from a first-generation, low-income, and/or disability background. (q031)**

Strongly Agree (28.6%)  Agree (15.6%)  Neutral (53.2%)  Disagree (0.0%)  Strongly Disagree (2.6%)  
**n=77, mean=3.68, sd=0.979**

**30. Cal State San Marcos professors demonstrate sensitivity to my unique needs as a student from a first-generation, low-income, and/or disability background. (q032)**

Strongly Agree (18.9%)  Agree (56.8%)  Disagree (13.5%)  Strongly Disagree (10.8%)  
**n=74, mean=3.59, sd=1.25**

**31. In Cal State San Marcos classrooms, I can offer my ideas should I choose to share them. (q033)**

Strongly Agree (16.4%)  Agree (65.8%)  Disagree (8.2%)  Strongly Disagree (9.6%)



**$n=73$ , mean=3.71, sd=1.14**

**32. In Cal State San Marcos classrooms, I feel like diversity of ideas, world views, and respect of others' differing attitudes and opinions is promoted by students. (q034)**

Strongly Agree (20.3%)  Agree (44.6%)  Neutral (31.1%)  Disagree (1.4%)

Strongly Disagree (2.7%)

**$n=74$ , mean=3.78, sd=0.880**

**33. In Cal State San Marcos classrooms, I feel like diversity of ideas, world views, and respect of others' differing attitudes and opinions is promoted by professors. (q035)**

Strongly Agree (29.7%)  Agree (36.5%)  Neutral (31.1%)  Disagree (1.4%)

Strongly Disagree (1.4%)

**$n=74$ , mean=3.92, sd=0.888**

**34. In Cal State San Marcos classrooms, I feel like diversity of ideas, world views, and respect of others' differing attitudes and opinions is promoted by staff. (q036)**

Strongly Agree (26.0%)  Agree (37.0%)  Neutral (34.2%)  Disagree (1.4%)

Strongly Disagree (1.4%)

**$n=73$ , mean=3.85, sd=0.877**

**35. I feel a sense of pride and belonging at Cal State San Marcos. (q037)**

Strongly Agree (40.5%)  Agree (33.8%)  Neutral (23.0%)  Disagree (0.0%)

Strongly Disagree (2.3%)

**$n=74$ , mean=4.09, sd=0.939**

**36. What is the most effective means of communicating with you?**

**63**  Email (q038\_0001)

**17**  In person (q038\_0002)

**5**  Posting on social networking sites (q038\_0003)

**2**  Mail (q038\_0004)

**0**  Other (q038\_other)





**37. Do you have any of the following accounts?**

- 60  Facebook (q039\_0001)
- 25  My Space (q039\_0002)
- 11  Twitter (q039\_0003)
- 6  Blog (q039\_0004)
- 2  Webpage (q039\_0005)
- 0  Other (q039\_other)

**38. What is the most effective means to deliver or present information to you?**

- 32  Workshops or classes (q040\_0001)
- 19  Virtual or online classes (q040\_0002)
- 50  One-to-one in person meeting (q040\_0003)
- 15  Post on social networking (q040\_0004)
- 2  Other (q040\_other)

**V. FINANCIAL LITERACY**

**39. I am concerned about accumulating excessive debt from educational expenses. (q041)**

- Strongly Agree (50.0%)  Agree (28.4%)  Neutral (10.8%)  Disagree (6.8%)
  - Strongly Disagree (4.1%)
- n=74, mean=4.14, sd=1.114**

**40. I understand the difference between subsidized student loans and unsubsidized student loans. (q042)**

- Strongly Agree (37.8%)  Agree (39.2%)  Neutral (9.5%)  Disagree (10.8%)
  - Strongly Disagree (2.7%)
- n=74, mean=3.99, sd=1.079**

**41. I need more information and/or guidance to help me manage my finances. (q043)**

- Strongly Agree (20.3%)  Agree (31.1%)  Neutral (31.1%)  Disagree (12.2%)
  - Strongly Disagree (5.4%)
- n=74, mean=3.49, sd=1.113**



**42. During the last year, holds have been placed on my CSUSM student account for failure to pay all my student fees on time. (q044)**

Strongly Agree (8.3%)  Agree (9.7%)  Neutral (9.7%)  Disagree (31.9%)  
 Strongly Disagree (40.3%)  
**n=72, mean=2.14, sd=1.282**

**43. Student loans are a necessity for attending college. (q045)**

Strongly Agree (31.5%)  Agree (28.8%)  Neutral (23.3%)  Disagree (11.0%)  
 Strongly Disagree (5.5%)  
**n=73, mean=3.70, sd=1.187**

**44. I have learned plenty of information about financial aid offered at Cal State San Marcos. (q046)**

Strongly Agree (23.6%)  Agree (52.8%)  Neutral (16.7%)  Disagree (5.6%)  
 Strongly Disagree (1.4%)  
**n=72, mean=3.82, sd=0.868**

**45. I have financial aid at Cal State San Marcos, yet can not make ends meet. (q047)**

Strongly Agree (31.9%)  Agree (18.1%)  Neutral (26.4%)  Disagree (19.4%)  
 Strongly Disagree (4.2%)  
**n=72, mean=3.54, sd=1.244**

**46. I expect to graduate from Cal State San Marcos will more financial loans than I would like. (p048\_0001-0006)**

Strongly Agree (30.4%)  Agree (20.3%)  Neutral (13.9%)  Disagree (19.0%)  
 Strongly Disagree (1.3%)  I do not have loans (12.7%)  
**n=79**

**47. I worry about being able to pay off my financial aid loans. (q049\_0001-0006)**



Strongly Agree (**35.4%**)  Agree (**20.3%**)  Neutral (**13.9%**)  Disagree (**8.9%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**2.5%**)  I do not have loans (**15.2%**)  
**n=79**

**48. I plan on attending graduate school and applying for students loans. (q050)**

Strongly Agree (**21.9%**)  Agree (**27.4%**)  Neutral (**32.9%**)  Disagree (**15.1%**)  
 Strongly Disagree (**2.7%**)  
**n=73, mean=3.51 sd=1.082**

**49. Please share with us brief descriptions of any other topics or concerns related to SSS staff, services or campus climate that you feel were not addressed in this survey.**

(See Appendix 2)



## ***Appendices: Open Ended Responses***

### **Appendix 1: Answers to the question 15 "Describe how SSS staff members demonstrate sensitivity to my unique needs as a student from a first-generation, low-income, and/or disability background."**

- All SSS staff members have been there for me when I needed them for important things in my life, things with school, even through email they would respond to me with in a day; and thats a big plus for me. I also enjoy how they don't adress us students as a councelor but as a friend and they truely are people i can come to with anything and most importantky people I can trust.
- Always available for questions or advice regarding school and classes.
- Being that I am a first generation college student, staff have been very helpful in providing recourses for funding and academic counseling to ensure I am geared in the right path to graduate.
- By giving priority resgistration
- By having a program geared toward first generation, low-income, and/or disability backgrounds it demonstrates a sensitivity.
- By knowing about us this kind of background they give more suggesstions that realte to that information, and assure us that it is challenging for being first generation but they are there for a guidance that a non first generation student may already have.
- By listening to my situation and offering support. Sometimes just to have someone listen and understand makes a big difference.
- EOP/SSS staff are understanding to personal situations and they try to help students however they can.
- Everyone is very understanding about my personal situation. Also they offer a variety of opportunity to make me take full adavantage of the services on campus
- Everytime i have had a question and have gone to see them about it they always do their best to help me.
- give me support, motivation, and advice
- help with resoueces and support and encourage me, they are also very unserstanding
- I feel they understand my needs they take us into prespective and make sure that we never feel let down and keep pushing forward they are highly motivating and will help in any way that they can do so.
- I had a hold on my account this semester and had to pay off a hefty bill. I could not take advantage of priority registration because I had to wait two more weeks to pay my balance. I talked to a counselor about this ordeal and how unfortunate it was, when come to find out they were able to take the hold off my account. I would have been able to register



for my classes my promising to pay the balance in those two weeks. The point is, the counselor demonstrated sensitivity and was very understanding:).

- I had a tutor Margaret that helped me alot.
- I have interacted with Joe Ledesma and Jason Tan and they both have taken the time to listen to me and have offered their assistance to me. I feel their attention is truly genuine and I feel that I can turn to them with any problems or concerns I may have. I don't feel in any way rushed or pressed for time when I meet with them.
- If I have any problems they listen to me and try to give me advice.
- My counsler has asked me if I am able to understand my lecutures despite of my hearing impairment
- Offering advice, encouraging me to apply for scholarships, asking about my daily life outside of school.
- One of the counselors I met with was also a first-generation graduate & I felt he understood my situation fisthand.
- The staff's only agenda is the student. They are supportive when I'm in a crisis. Which fortunately is not too often, but when I need help they are the ones that I turn to. For instance, when my hard drive crashed they helped me with a computer to borrow. It was essential that I have used this computer until my own was fixed. Even when the one staff member was out of the office on the day of renewal, another staff member stepped up and helped me out. They could have just said, "Well to bad, you have to wait", but they knew that waiting would put me behind and therefore I was successful in keeping up with my work.
- They act like they care and try to do everything possible to help.
- they are always there for my questions and if i meet with them as they assigned everyone 2 times a semester you get to get a check from them they are realaly helpfull!
- They are there not just only to help you throughtout school but they are also there to help you with your life.
- They are there when there is something that comes up and are willing to help to do whatever they can to answer my question. They are really helpful.
- They frequently send out e-mails that contain information about scholarships, resources and workshops that are on campus. They always make themselves available when I have questions or I need academic advising. SSS is like my home on campus.
- they give you mutual support as well as provider you with tools that can help you succeed in the long run
- They have been very helpful by listening carefully to me. They have also helped me during my difficult times..
- they help me when i have questions and don't know where to find the answers



- They just really understand the struggles associated with being a first generation student.
- they know how to listen to the needs of the students.
- They know I need lots of information and help me with all my financial aid questions. I feel as if they genuinely want to help me out.
- THEY LISTEN TO ME AND ENCOURAGE ME TO CONTINUE MY EDUCATION
- They made sure was going on the right track and letting me know what classes to take and how balance my class out, able succeed this semester.
- They provide resources and help to look for alternatives regarding financial issues.
- they refer me to various finaid/scholarship programs on campus
- They sincerely care about the problems we are going through as students and not only do the listen, they also help!
- they treat everyone with equally with respect and assist them how ever they can
- They tried to give us a lot of support in school and in personal problems. Whenever I have asked for help, they have always been there to help.
- They try and help you out with needs or problems you may have and are always willing to help students out in whatever ways possible.
- They understand us by saying things strait out menaing if we are in trouble they say wat we need to do inorder to for us to improve ourselves. they help us to get resources as far as recomendation letters, tutoring, givnig us access to use computers and free printing.
- this was the 1st semester and i felt that i got more help then i have ever recieved. being able to print for free is a big help. having someone to talk to also helps.
- Understanding
- very understanding
- very understanding, many options for aid
- Well it's a little embarrassing asking for help especially when it has nothing to do with school, but with resources such as jobs, food, clothes. My counselor has always helped me by giving me phone numbers or addresses where I can go for help. I also feel like family my counselor knows my name and he even remembers previous issues I have talked to him about. He asks me how my son is doing and how I'm doing if I need any help with anything.
- Well they were very supportive in helping me with my Student disability and were sensitive to the issue and where able to get me services unlike the DSS
- When I ask question they try to answer my question as best as possible.



- With empathy and understanding the staff helped me choose the right moves toward my goals, major and life. They have gone above and beyond to help me. I'm truly blessed to have this program.

**Appendix 2: Answers to the questions 51 "Please share with us brief descriptions of any other topics or concerns related to SSS staff, services or campus climate that you feel were not addressed in this survey."**

- Can I ask my SSS counselor if he could guide me in my specific financial aid situation.
- how local students can get or be more involved with students from outside the area.
- I am in the computer lab a great deal of the time and the free ten pages of printing a day is great, but it seems like there is always something wrong with a few of the computers or the printer. I wish there was a way to have a back up or something else.
- I feel that SSS has been very helpful in getting me through my last 3 years at Cal State San Marcos. They offer services that are very vital to ones college career and hope they continue the great work.
- I think that the SSS staff is great. I love the 1 unit class opportunity that is offered. I think it is awesome that they have raffles year round for students that give away prizes like tickets and parking permits.
- It would be nice if we could get scantrons, blue books, post-it notes, paper clips, from the SSS department
- Need a bigger computer lab. Always busy and very noisy, unable to work there. Quieter in the library.
- Nothing everything was covered and they are doing a fantastic job cant say more than they are very helpful through anything and i am very happy to be apart of the sss program.
- Some professors are very intimidating and they concentrate on threatening students rather than encouraging them..
- They are a well trained staff that are concerned about students and their needs.



