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Evaluating the Qualitative Aspects of a Community College Academic Success Program

Joselito Dacillo Coquilla
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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Joselito Dacillo Coquilla

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

Evaluating the Qualitative Aspects of a Community College Academic
Success Program

by

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MA, Ateneo de Manila University, 2000

BS, Notre Dame University, 1986

Final Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2024

Abstract

College academic success programs (ASP) frequently include both quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators (KPI). While the quantitative KPIs are typically programmed for evaluation within an ASP's implementation, evaluating qualitative KPIs is resource intensive and therefore, sometimes overlooked. The problem addressed by this study was the need to evaluate the qualitative KPIs in a large community college system's 2016 ASP (2016-2020). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to conduct a summative evaluation to determine the extent to which the college achieved its ASP's qualitative KPI objectives from the perspectives of students. The study was guided by Tinto's involvement theory and student engagement principles from other theorists. The three research questions centered on the qualitative KPIs that sought to (a) integrate 21st-century skillsets into the curriculum, (b) provide exemplary customer service for students, and (c) provide guidance and feedback to facilitate the attainment of students' career interests and goals. The purposive sampling process included a flyer that was displayed in public areas on the college system's five campuses to recruit students who were enrolled during the 2016-2020 ASP. Open-ended semi-structured interview transcripts from 12 student interviews were analyzed using Saldaña's four-step coding process. The resulting three themes included (a) 21st century skill development within the curriculum (with eight subthemes), (b) staff and faculty interpersonal skills for excellent customer service (with six subthemes), and (c) the importance of technology to facilitate providing guidance and feedback to students. The program evaluation report for the college's leadership encourages positive social change by providing a model for the qualitative evaluation of future ASP initiatives.

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Dedication

I am grateful for the support of my wife, Mary Jane, and the inspiration of my three kids, Jecho, Joshua, and Julia. I dedicate this capstone study to them and to everyone who inspired me during these years of my doctoral study. To my colleagues in the ministry at the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, Rev. Isaias Ginson, thank you for inspiring me to finish as soon as possible so that I can proceed to my goal of serving the missional community. Finally, I wish to dedicate this research project to all educators, the higher learning professionals who work tirelessly with both traditional and nontraditional students, finding new ways to engage, motivate, and direct students to successful outcomes in their paths along life's great journey.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The steady growth in enrollment of adult learners has challenged colleges and universities to develop effective student success programs. This situation is especially true in the case of nontraditional students (NTS). NTS is characterized as being 25 years and older and has delayed enrollment after high school (Hutto, 2017). NTS differ from traditional students because they bring adult characteristics, like family and work responsibilities, to the classroom (Kasworm et al., 2012; Knowles et al., 2020). Often, NTS return to college to satisfy career development and professional goals that do not always include graduation (NCES.org, 2018). As a result, NTS academic goals may include certificate programs that lead to better employment qualifications (Kimbark et al., 2017).

Colleges have implemented student success initiatives under various names, including Student Success Course (SSC), College Discovery Program (CDP), and College-Wide Retention Program (CWRP), to help students reach their individual goals (Baéz, Rodríguez, et al., 2016; Kimbark et al., 2017; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016). Mertes and Jankoviak (2016) emphasized that a college-wide retention program's efficacy depends on planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating. Building effective student success programs involves strategic planning, top-down implementation, and criterion-based evaluation to determine programs' efficacy for improving student success (Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016). Kimbark et al. (2017) explained that exemplary college success initiatives focus on increasing college access, managing campus life, monitoring

progress, and offering assistance resources to improve success. Therefore, the challenge for helping NTS students achieve their academic and career goals often involves helping them develop a persistent focus on their goals (Fong et al., 2017; Kimbark et al., 2017).

This study's research problem is that Southwest City Central College's (SCCC, a pseudonym) academic success program (ASP) has not been evaluated for the achievement of its qualitative objectives. As provided in Figure 1, the student success initiative announced four objectives. Three of the objectives (1.1, 1.2, & 1.3) emphasized qualitative key performance indicators (KPIs) that remain unevaluated (Flipsnack, 2016) and will be the focus of this study (see underlined KPIs).

Figure 1

Academic Success Program Objectives and Key Performance Indicators



Note: From "SCCC Strategic Plan Book" by Flipsnack.com, 2016, p. 46. The underlined KPIs remain to be evaluated by the college and create a focus for this study.

SCCC is a community college in a southwestern state that has implemented a student success initiative called the ASP. The SCCC ASP was designed to assist the growing number of traditional and NTS students in achieving success throughout several system campuses. It was conceived and implemented to be embedded to support students from enrollment to fulfilling their goals, whether those goals were graduation, transfer to university, certification, or simply career development or advancement (Flipsnack, 2016). The college evaluated the ASP's Objective #1.3, KPI #1, using weighted student success points, including (a) college credit attainment, (b) credentials awarded, (c) completion in developmental education, (d) completion of gateway courses, and (e) transfer to other academic institutions (Flipsnack, 2016). Because the objectives that focus on qualitative aspects of the ASP (see the underlined KPIs contained in Objectives 1.1, 1.2, & 1.3 of Figure 1) have not yet been evaluated, the focus of this research is a qualitative program evaluation to explore student experiences and perspectives related to (a) SCCC's integration of 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness (KPI #1.1.1), (b) SCCC's implementation of exemplary customer service for students (KPI #1.2.1), and (c) SCCC's goal to provide continuous guidance and feedback to facilitate the completion of degrees, certificates, and awards (KPI #1.3.2). Because the KPIs for Objective 1.4 were focused on external partnerships, that objective was deemed outside the scope of this research initiative.

Research has reported the importance of student success initiatives in colleges (Grabowski et al., 2016; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016) and the importance of program evaluation to determine their efficacy (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). Student success

initiatives have long been used on campuses to increase retention, graduation, and success (Baéz et al., 2016; Gail-Claybrooks & Taylor, 2016; Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Kimbark et al., 2017; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Sutton, 2016). But, few gauge success from the perspectives of the students they serve (Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Kahu et al., 2017; Kimbark et al., 2017; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Sutton, 2016). While student success initiative program evaluations focus on quantitative data, they often end with recommendations for collecting and analyzing open-ended qualitative feedback to comprehensively understand the efficacy of the programs they evaluated. Without a qualitative program evaluation, SCCC will continue to invest resources in pursuing strategic goals without fully understanding the consequences of those efforts (Hutto, 2017; G. Markle, 2015).

Rationale

The SCCC ASP evaluation plan conducted to date only examined the objective data related to the KPIs on completion and placement (Flipsnack, 2016). The college measured student success in terms of academic degree completion and placement of students either as job placements or university transfers (personal communication, Director, Office of Institutional Research [OIR], July 10, 2020). The director explained that the objective KPI evaluation results were easy to analyze and understand, consistent, precise, reliable, and generalizable. In addition, the director explained that qualitative data were not used in the evaluation because qualitative research and data analysis are not usually conducted by the OIR (Personal communication, July 10, 2020). In short, the SCCC evaluation plan did not include qualitative data in its evaluation for accreditation

reporting, even though the ASP also emphasized subjective student experiences as criteria for success.

Conducting qualitative summative evaluation research will direct my attention and research efforts to understand college initiatives related to student success. Civitas Learning (n.d.) found that only 60% of 1,000 initiatives in about 55 colleges and universities around the United States positively impacted students' success, leaving the other 40% of initiatives without impacts. Delving into the report proper, other exciting and relevant points emerged. For example, the top five initiatives with positive impacts on students were career planning, adviser meetings, supplemental instructions, scholarships, and tutoring (Civitas Learning, n.d.). The effectiveness also varied by student subgroups. The Black and Hispanic groups benefited most from the personalized academic support, while White students benefited from the academic, financial support, and student-life interventions (Civitas Learning, n.d.). According to the SCCC's OIR, the ASP positively impacted objective measures (Director, OIR personal communication, July 10, 2020). However, there is scant evidence that the ASP influenced the students' perspectives and experiences related to integrating 21st-century skillsets as content across the curriculum (KPI 1.1.1), developing and implementing exemplary customer service for students (KPI 1.2.1) or providing continuous guidance and feedback to students to facilitate students' completion (KPI 1.3.2). Therefore, the purpose of this study will be to conduct qualitative summative evaluation research to determine if SCCC's ASP has achieved its qualitative objectives.

Definition of Terms

In research, specialized terms must be defined and operationalized for consistent use and meaning. In this section, I provide definitions of the terms that will be used in the study.

Academic success program (ASP): Initiatives are designed to support and improve students' integration, academic readiness, and career development (Southwest City Central College, n.d.). Critical aspects of these programs often include efforts to improve student retention, goal attainment, college completion, and individuals' financial security (Anumba, 2015; Hutto, 2017). The ASP at SCCC included specific strategies and skills to help students prepare for college life, including educational strategies and skills to prepare for college life and skills necessary for their work environment (Southwest City Central College, n.d.).

Attrition: A measure of the number of students who leave college before fulfilling their academic program or career goals (Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016).

Completion: A report of the number and type of credentials awarded to students such as certificates and degrees in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Continuing Education (CE); Middle State Association (MSA)/ Commission of Higher Education (CHE) transfers; and associate degrees (Southwest City Central College, n.d.).

Dual credit: The student category belongs to high school and is enrolled in college-level courses taught at their high school campuses or college campuses, fulfilling both their high school requirements for graduation and earning the student college credits (Flipsnack, 2016, 2020).

Full-time student: The student category whose enrollment has 12 or more semester credits hours in a semester (Flipsnack, 2016, 2020).

Nontraditional students: Adult learners, age 25 and older, with some delayed enrollment after high school; with some part-time or full-time employment while studying; with several roles other than a student like as spouse, a parent, as a worker, as a community leader, etc.; and with some financial independence, or have come to school without support from their parents (Hutto, 2017; G. Markle, 2015).

Part-time enrollment: The student category whose enrollment has 11 or fewer semester credits hours in a semester (Flipsnack, 2016, 2020).

Persistence: The college continues until the desired academic program or career goals are achieved (Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016).

Placement: A report of students who transferred to a 4-year institution or university or who have transitioned to a job or enlisted in the military (Flipsnack, 2016, 2020).

Program evaluation: A systematic analysis of a program to determine its efficacy (Fleming, 2012; Praslova, 2010). A program evaluation specific to the local problem and initiative is conducted to improve trust and confidence for all institution stakeholders for funding and support (Oliveira, 2017; Ozaki et al., 2019).

Retention rate: Students' rates persist in their educational program at an institution, which is expressed as percentages for students from the previous fall. The latter either re-enrolled or completed their program by the current fall (NCES.org, 2018).

Student success points: The weighted completion reports on college credit attainments, the credential awards for students completing an associate degree, certificate, etc. The completion of developmental education and completion of gateway courses like first college-level math or English course (Flipsnack, 2016, 2020).

Traditional students: Dependent students between the ages of 18 to 23 who have continuous enrollment from high school to college may have enrolled full-time. They may have some part-time jobs but are enrolled in college full-time based on the number of courses prescribed within the academic program (Renirie, 2017).

Significance of the Study

Exploring students' experiences through a qualitative evaluation of the ASP's qualitative objectives and KPIs will provide SCCC leaders with new actionable information about the program's overall success. This qualitative evaluation research may provide formative value about how SCCC experienced positive change as a result of pursuing the ASP's subjective objectives and related KPIs. The qualitative evaluation research may also provide summative value in terms of whether the qualitative objectives and KPIs were actually met. As a result, positive social change may be promoted in a combination of three ways. First, by identifying formative themes related to organizational change reflected through pursuing the subjective ASP objectives and KPIs, SCCC college leaders will have new information to integrate with future quality enhancement plans designed specifically to pursue positive organizational change. Second, by identifying summative themes related to whether the ASP's subjective goals and KPIs were met, college leaders will have new information about the need to change

future objectives and KPIs to improve ASP success. Finally, colleges that are similar to SCCC will have a new model for evaluating the subjective targets of their ASP initiatives. In short, positive social change is achieved when colleges achieve their quantitative and qualitative goals and objectives. Student engagement and success are facilitated through effective ASPs that move college cultures in positive, intended directions. The research findings that relate to the three subjective KPIs will reflect the quality of graduates that SCCC produces to improve alumni, the college's reputation in the community, and the community itself.

Research Questions

According to Burkholder et al. (2016), research questions are direct extensions of the research problem. They develop the body of knowledge for the study, set the research scope, and guide data collection (Burkholder et al., 2016). Thus, the research questions (RQ) narrow down the study's answerable problem and guide researchers in finding answers (Burkholder et al., 2016). The overarching question to be addressed by this study seeks to fill an evaluation gap by evaluating the program to gain an understanding of how SCCC ASP's qualitative objectives and KPIs were experienced by students it served. The following RQs will further guide the study:

RQ1: What are SCCC student perceptions and experiences about integrating 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness during the effective dates of the ASP?

RQ2: How do SCCC students perceive and experience the college's customer services in terms of improving the college experience for students?

RQ3: What are SCCC student perceptions and experiences about guidance and feedback provided to or received by students to facilitate the attainment of their career interests and goals?

Review of the Literature

The phenomenon being investigated by this qualitative evaluation research will be students' subjective perceptions and experiences during the ASP's implementation. Specifically, the ASP espoused the need to prepare students to integrate 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness, implement exemplary customer service to improve the student experience, and provide continuous guidance and feedback to students to facilitate career interests' goals. The phenomenon under investigation aligns with Tinto's models that emphasize qualitative aspects of students' experiences, including engagement, integration, and retention (Tinto, 1997). After discussing Tinto's theory of student involvement, my literature review focus will shift to reviewing the broader problem.

Conceptual Framework

I will use Tinto's (1997) involvement theory, which includes engagement, integration, and retention theory, as a lens for interpreting the ASP, the literature, and student experiences. This framework helps explain why students stay or attrite from college (Tinto, 1997). Vincent Tinto's involvement models revolved around students' interaction in the academic and campus environment (Tinto, 1997). In these models, Tinto suggested the need for the institution to connect meaningfully with students if the intention is to retain them in school. Involvement in this model refers to the need for

students to feel like they belong on campus, integrate themselves into college and their classes, and establish a relationship with each other while progressing towards a degree (Karp et al., 2010). According to Karp et al. (2010), students who experienced engagement and integration by developing meaningful relationships with fellow students, joining academic clubs, or engaging in related extracurricular activities are more likely to persist than those who isolate themselves from others. Students' isolation can be an obstacle to integration when students cannot feel at home on the campus, or when students do not believe that the college can help them meet their goals, they would be likely to attrite from college (Karp et al., 2010). Such isolation inhibits the engagement and integration process, thereby inhibiting persistence. According to Karp et al., persistence and success happened when their integration into the college led them to connect with other students and participate and engage in various campus and academic activities. Working to improve the SCCC-ASP program, Tinto's involvement model of success can inform educational leaders and faculty to promote students' engagement and integration in any academic and campus life, which will, in turn, encourage students' persistence and success.

Students' experiences on the SCCC ASP initiative can be evaluated using Tinto's (1997) involvement models. Two areas of students' involvement will be investigated: the academic and the social. Academic involvement occurs when students become engaged and integrated into their intellectual development and their college's academic demands. At the same time, social involvement manifests as students create meaningful relationships outside of the classroom and involve themselves in campus activities with

other people. Svanum and Bigatti (2009) argued that academic engagement led to student success by focusing on student engagement in academics and campus life. Webber et al. (2013) discussed students' persistence due to social integration and students' participation in curricular and co-curricular events when students learned to make friends with others and faculty and became part of the campus family. Thus, Tinto's involvement model emphasizes what individual students can and institutions can do to realize the success goals. Tinto's framework in this context can be helpful in understanding student persistence and success in postsecondary education. Through strong campus engagement, students' involvement in campus life can strengthen persistence and success (Tinto, 2006, 2017a, 2017b).

Literature Review of the Broader Problem

This section reviews the extant literature that helps define the current landscape of student success programs in higher education. Search terms I used in my research of current and seminal works on student success included 21st-century skills, higher education customer service, higher education student advising, persistence, attrition, student success, academic performance, career achievement, and career goals. I used multiple scholarly databases and indices in my searches, including Google Scholar and resources available through Walden University's research library, including Education Research Complete, ProQuest, and Walden University Online Library.

21st Century Skills

Education is about giving students knowledge and the required skills they need to succeed in life: family, workplace, and society (Itohan Oviawe, 2017; Motallebzadeh et

al., 2018; Urbani et al., 2017; Wolff & Booth, 2017). The workplace demands more individuals who possess skills for employment in the 21st century (Itohan Oviawe, 2017). Motallebzadeh et al. (2018) discussed the importance of learning 21st-century skills for graduating students to survive in the new global economy. Motallebzadeh et al.'s framework included an underpinning of academics supported by requisite personal and cognitive skills for success in life (Motallebzadeh et al., 2018). These skills require that students learn to be critical and constructive thinkers, adept problem solvers, able to communicate orally and in writing, capable of life-long learning, and media literate (Motallebzadeh et al., 2018). According to Urbani et al. (2017), the teachers and the classroom are the venues for practicing those skills. Thus, educators can emphasize and develop those skills in their students. Wolff and Booth (2017) affirmed Urbani et al.'s argument that schools have a role in preparing students with well-rounded qualities like the ability to collaborate, problem-solve, think constructively and critically, and develop habits of self-directed learning.

Twenty-first-century skills include a plethora of skillsets not typically addressed in the higher education curriculum. Hanover Research (2014) listed 21st-century skillsets that students must acquire to prepare for work and participate in a global economy. As have been highlighted by others, these skills included more than just computers and technology literacy. According to both Urbani et al. (2017) and Hanover Research, important 21st-century skills also include awareness and appreciation for different cultures, information and media literacy, ethical personal leadership, civics and citizenry, communication skills, social sustainability, and technical expertise. The responsibility to

prepare students for this 21st century rests largely on educators and community partners, including employers (Hanover Research, 2014).

Skillsets training is conducted in the classroom and the workplace environment (Itohan Oviawe, 2017). One notable training model was the technical vocational education and training (TVET) process used by both schools and employers. This type of training helped students acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes for more suitable employment and occupation (Itohan Oviawe, 2017). Training for workplace skillsets was considered critical for economic and technological development (Itohan Oviawe, 2017). According to Itohan Oviawe (2017), the TVET model was flexible and adaptable in general education courses and content in courses across the curriculum. While the TVET model has been used primarily in education settings, other skill development models have also been used in workplace environments.

According to Itohan Oviawe (2017), the Workplace Training Model (WTM) includes the training or learning undertaken in the workplace, usually through on-the-job training. The WTM works on the principle of experiential learning skills. Under the WRM model, employees demonstrate desired skills while receiving direct supervision and coaching feedback (Itohan Oviawe, 2017). Combining VTEC and WTM models can complement and reinforce skill development in both environments. This leveraging effect is what Boholano (2017) supported for instructors and employers to use to engage new generations of students in higher-order skills development. Preservice teachers' training programs on 21st-century skillsets must be conducted to prepare teachers to achieve these

goals. Currently, the SCCC ASP does not include a 21st-century skill development model but highlights the need to develop such skills among students.

Others have emphasized slightly different skill sets for students in modern times. For example, Sharma and Sharma (2010) added communication, motivation, enthusiasm, and trust to those skills already mentioned. These soft skills are critical to individual success and business (Sharma & Sharma, 2010). An engineering graduate might have acquired technical knowledge but may lack communication, emotional skills, and social skills (Sharma & Sharma, 2010). Thus, both technical and soft skills have been emphasized as 21st-century skills deemed integral for student success. SCCC ASP program may integrate soft skills training and improving soft skills among students to help them prepare for suitable employment in the future. The lack of soft skills can affect employment and future stability, adversely affect stress management, and contribute to economic difficulties for families (Wolff & Booth, 2017). Likewise, such deficits also adversely affect business productivity, workers' engagement, customer service, interpersonal relationships, and competitiveness (Wolff & Booth, 2017). Thus, higher education institutions and partnering employers can set up training programs specifically to develop 21st-century skills. The failure to improve student preparedness in skill development areas can adversely impact students' academic achievement, business proficiency outcomes, the country's marketplace standing in the global work environment.

Customer Service in Higher Education

Institutions of higher learning are competitive, so improving customer service strategies is an essential factor in the success of those organizations (Wahab, 2016). In addition, customer service contributes to student satisfaction, loyalty, and school spirit (Wahab, 2016). According to Wahab (2016), students are like consumers globally, and they need to experience people who care to be satisfied customers. Chandra et al. (2019) affirmed that colleges and universities have to provide quality customer service for the following aims (a) to improve corporate image, (b) to provide student satisfaction, and (c) to maintain student loyalty. Maintaining the quality of customer service will affect student perceptions about the institutional image, enrollment, and satisfaction (Chandra et al., 2019). The SCCC-ASP has included providing quality customer service as the desired outcome and is identified as an objective to be explored through this study.

Colleges and universities like SCCC have committed to delivering quality customer service to students. Wahab (2016) argued that customer service in campuses always involves different response protocols and activities based on identified student needs. Knowing student needs is the primary step for improved customer service (Wahab, 2016). Staff and instructor training on various customer service issues is needed (Wahab, 2016). Accordingly, Wahab added that customer service training should include improved services, responsiveness to customer issues, efficient follow-up and clear directions, clear communication strategies, and conflict management. Customer satisfaction is the primary goal of customer service, which often has to sacrifice the rigor of school policies (Wahab, 2016). SCCC-ASP could use preparatory training for instructors and staff to improve customer service if data analysis indicates such a need.

Mashau and Schutte (2017) repeated what others cited as important for quality customer service. The four ideals for quality campus service included “(a) students should be treated with dignity and respect, (b) students should be given clear directions on how to handle specific issues, (c) school officials should be responsive to students and parents’ concerns, and (d) students’ grievances should be attended to promptly” (Mashau & Schutte, 2017, p. 138). To these important ideals of quality customer service, Chandra et al. (2019) added that each student should be treated as an individual with individual and unique needs and that college staff should actively engage with students and listen carefully for strategies to improve customer service. Following these ideals for customer service, higher education institutions can enhance student satisfaction and loyalty, thus improving campus life and the image of the college as a whole.

Higher Education Student Advising and Feedback

Student advising refers to students' ongoing interventions as a specific formative assessment (López-Pastor & Sicilia-Camacho, 2017). According to López-Pastor and Sicilia-Camacho (2017), student advising is also a process by which instructors and campus staff can provide continuous feedback to students during the learning process to enhance student self-regulation and transition. They added that this process best occurs when implanted in collaboration between instructors and students. When implemented transparently, student engagement and participation are enhanced (López-Pastor & Sicilia-Camacho, 2017).

Studies have shown that student engagement, participation, and attendance provide valuable early alert information that can be used to assist students in need

(Bettinger & Baker, 2014). According to Bettinger and Baker (2014), individualized student coaching was the most effective approach to alert college officials when students were making decisions about withdrawing from college. When alerted, the advising faculty or staff would contact the student to set up a meeting to identify the most problematic issues the student was experiencing. A well-trained coach then worked with the student to create an action plan for staying and excelling in school. Daily activities support short-term and long-term goals to develop skills that are needed, including time management and self-advocacy (Bettinger & Baker, 2014). Studies have shown that students actively involved in quality coaching or advising programs were more likely to persist in and complete their studies (Bettinger & Baker, 2014). The literature is replete with best-practice coaching and advising for college students.

According to Burge-Hall et al. (2019), high-quality student advising and coaching have four goals that higher education institutions and their students strive for. Those goals include (a) an advising accountability process; (b) a focus on creating a culture of student success; (c) frequent student-centered advising for first-year students, first-semester transfer, and identified at-risk; and (d) a personalized approach that addresses students' individual needs. To achieve these aims, the authors encouraged education institutions to provide venues of professional development for staff and faculty that (a) encourage research-derived best practices in advising and coaching, (b) include both academic and career planning to make the intervention more meaningful from the student's perspective, and (c) employ advanced technology resources for student tracking and follow-up (Burge-Hall et al., 2019). According to Flipsnack (2016), the SCCC-ASP

integrates continuous student advising and feedback as part of college success initiatives to increase career goals. In the case of SCCC, the initiative also aimed at reducing the barriers to student persistence and success as part of its advising protocols (Flipsnack, 2016).

Barriers to Student Persistence and Success

Recent studies have focused on the different barriers that theoretically affect student persistence and student success (Bruce et al., 2016; Farmer & Hope, 2015; Holland & DeLuca, 2016; Muñoz et al., 2018). Bruce et al. (2016) studied how the language barrier negatively affects students' better participation in the classroom and affects students' persistence. The researcher then proposed that innovative approaches to accommodate students with different language and educational backgrounds could support persistence and success. This finding informs the study to consider the language issue among non-English speaking students among NTS at SCCC. SCCC has enrolled Hispanic and Asians who were non-native English-speaking students needing language development interventions vital for college academic success (Community College Review, 2019). As a result, SCCC might benefit from developing a supportive campus environment through its various customer services for non-English speaking students in the college, including student advising and early alert services.

Farmer and Hope (2015) conducted a quantitative study on the barriers to success among African American male students. The study revealed that students with a higher high school grade point average (pre-college predictor) and with higher first-semester GPAs (college predictor) have a higher chance of success (Farmer & Hope, 2015).

Colleges that model these findings will emphasize that students achieve higher GPAs in their high school-to-college bridge programs that facilitate high school students' college preparedness, especially in their first semester in college.

Holland and DeLuca (2016) found that the lack of relevant career guidance among students affected students' failure to sustain and succeed in college. They studied 150 low-income youths who joined a short workforce trade school program that did not focus on career goals that were meaningful to the participants. Many of these students left the program before completing it, with large debts and without work. This study is relevant to SCCC-ASP planning and evaluation to find the need to emphasize appropriate career planning and guidance that enables students to pursue something based on their interests and career goals.

The Unique Needs of Nontraditional Students

Some studies have highlighted biological, psychological, and social factors that affect student success in the college environment. For example, Grabowski et al. (2016) discussed the impact of conflicting roles on NTS' academic success. Role conflict and lack of family support were found among common attrition factors (Grabowski et al., 2016). However, the authors stressed the need for flexible course options and an adult education plan that helps NTS pursue their academic plans on a part-time, flexible schedule that accommodates their academic needs (Grabowski et al., 2016).

NTS has been the subject of studies about community college success (Graves & Bledsoe, 2015; Kearney et al., 2018; G. Markle, 2015). Graves and Bledsoe (2015) also emphasized the importance of colleges focusing on NTS populations. Accordingly,

colleges need to know and understand the NTS population as they grow in number by developing effective strategies to meet their learning needs. The researchers stressed the importance of faculty to truly understand key adult learning characteristics to provide the right strategies for their academic growth and success (Graves & Bledsoe, 2015). To truly understand the key adult learning needs of SCCC students, SCCC instructors should incorporate strategies that relate to student career goals as per the ASP initiative. Kearney et al. (2018) used a qualitative case approach to determine the importance of NTS involvement, focusing on a sense of connectedness in their first year on campus to improve NTS success. Thus, learning the NTS issues, conditions, and needs could inform educators and leaders at SCCC to create an effective first-year college success program for students enrolled in the college. G. Markle (2015) used a mixed-method study with NTS students to study role conflict as a factor in NTS students' failure to graduate from college. The study highlighted the importance of a supportive school environment to help NTS meet their adult student responsibilities and engender confidence to finish college to pursue their career plans. The SCCC ASP initiative emphasized similar objectives for improving student preparedness and campus-life experiences.

Supportive Environments

Similar studies in higher education today put the role of college faculty and college support as factors of student success (M. Miller, 2017; Wlodarsky, 2018). M. Miller (2017) recommended a supportive college environment, including positive faculty attitudes, to inspire students to pursue their personal and professional goals. This study affirms the ASP's goal to create supportive campus environments for students. Wlodarsky

(2018) proposed that colleges develop a professional development of faculty focusing on the practical and strategic approaches to improve student success. Wlodarsky affirms the ASP's qualitative goals for developing and including instructional strategies relevant to SCCC's students' career goals. While supportive environments and faculty relevance are highlighted as essential for student success, other literature points to improved student learning and success models.

Accelerated Learning and Corequisite Learning Models

Recent studies and trends in higher education discussed the role of accelerated learning and the corequisite learning model in student success (Barnett & Kopko, 2020; Latino et al., 2020; M. Miller, 2017). Accelerated learning (AL) is a learning model that defines student success in acquiring knowledge, skills, and the desired learning outcomes in a shorter period (Latino et al., 2020; M. Miller, 2017). AL's benefit is that students can finish college education effectively with less time and find employment quicker by using collaborative, multi-sensory, result-based, and case-based multidimensional approaches to learning (Barnett & Kopko, 2020; M. Miller, 2017). Many adult learners found this AL program attractive because it accommodated their needs, like keeping job and family commitments, which is sometimes difficult in traditional course design (M. Miller, 2017). Interestingly, as currently written, the ASP did not include AL strategies for addressing its NTS's needs, as suggested by these authors.

According to Emblom-Callahan et al. (2019), one approach to accelerate student success is using the corequisite instruction (CI) model. The CI model uses remediation and supplemental instruction in addition to traditional courses. Accelerated Learning

using a CI format provided colleges with higher completion rates for students under the program (Barhoum, 2018; Emblom-Callahan et al., 2019; Vandal, 2014). Students often enter colleges underprepared in core reading, writing, and mathematics requirements. Bridge programs for underprepared students would assist them in improving their campus and instructional experiences (Daugherty et al., 2018). Creating remedial and developmental courses improved students' study skills, study habits, and motivation to succeed (Pruett & Absher, 2015). The literature in this area has highlighted the need for improved bridge programs to assist incoming students in having expectations and self-management skills with multifactor orientation to strengthen the readiness of students entering college.

Multifactor Orientation and Goal Management

Recent studies included a multifactor orientation program useful for student completion and success (Lo et al., 2016; McKenna et al., 2018). Lo et al. (2016) designed an orientation for adult learners who, despite the apparent adequacy of their self-discipline and self-direction, still failed academically. The principal orientation characteristics provided support for improving organization skills, career-goal planning, navigating online learning, technology skills, self-and time-management skills, and other academic success skills to continue pursuing their college academic programs (McKenna et al., 2018). According to Kibby (2015), individual student support and services must respond to student goals and strengths rather than accommodate students' weaknesses. Accordingly, exploring students' strengths and developing their goals improved student experience and success (Flynn, 2016; Kibby, 2015). McKenna et al. (2018) lauded an

approach to delivering a multifactor orientation that helped students identify and break larger goals into smaller goals. While fulfilling smaller goals efficiently and quickly, students consequently achieved their larger goals. Hao et al. (2016) examined 41 students in one university focused on students' precommitment goals, academic performance, and attitudes towards academic and college life activities. *Precommitment* was the process of helping students define their learning goals given their learning phase or progress and then periodically comparing goals to their actual progress (Hao et al., 2016). This study affirmed that college students who are pre-committed to their goals perform better academically than students who did not participate in the precommitment process (Hao et al., 2016). Based on my review of the SCCC ASP, new student orientation did not include a precommitment process of the scope discussed in these studies.

College Success Interventions and Program Initiatives

Some notable student success programs have become instrumental in student retention and completion (Baéz, Rodriguez, et al., 2016; Gail-Claybrooks & Taylor, 2016; Kimbark et al., 2017; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Pruett & Absher, 2015). Baéz et al. (2016) explained the impact of the College Discovery Program (CDP) on improving high-risk students' academic success. CDP topics were selected based on their perceived relevance from the students' perspectives. Topics included personal finance study habits, time management, work-family role conflicts that interfere with academic preparation, academic performance, and college attrition. Gail-Claybrooks and Taylor (2016) studied the efficacy of a College Success Course (CSC) in providing academic intervention and remediation to improve classroom engagement and success. Kimbark et al. (2017)

discussed the importance of a Student Success Course (SSC) in students' academic achievement, engagement, retention, and success. Mertes and Jankoviak (2016) proposed the need to create a College-Wide Retention Program (CWRP) in different colleges to discuss various factors of student attrition. CWRP would discuss four factors affecting student attrition, including cost of attendance, lack of student motivation, student work schedules, and family obligations (Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Michael, 2020). The ASP being evaluated in this study incorporated many aspects of college success initiatives and programs documented in the literature.

Promoting Other Key Drivers for Success

Other studies have stressed the importance of exploring and focusing on key drivers for engagement and student success. By determining learners' self-interest, colleges can develop academic and campus activities that drive student participation (Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Kahu et al., 2017). According to Kahu et al. (2017), exploring students' interests can be a key driver for enhancing learning and persistence. The study involving 19 students demonstrated that self-interests were the antecedents of student engagement in college (Kahu et al., 2017). This finding also showed that students' interests and goals triggered other situational interests that enhanced students' cognitive and attitudinal reactions, leading to better learning and grades (Kahu et al., 2017). Employing student's interests can promote academic success and completion, including non-academic and psychosocial aspects of student's life like self-efficacy, emotions, social belonging, and well-being which facilitate student success (Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Mai, 2023). These key drivers for success are relevant to the ASP study because they

highlight the need for remediations and intervention mechanisms in any college success program to include the intrapersonal aspects of the students we serve.

Understanding individual needs and characteristics can be important when pursuing successful initiatives. Some studies emphasized appropriate interventions to address the barriers affecting students' success. (Hlinka, 2017; Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016; Muñoz et al., 2018). Hlinka (2017) identified three factors that influence success, including (a) the family's values toward education, (b) a sense of overcoming family obligations, and (c) the student's motivation. Other factors are critical also to student persistence in college, including college cost, job, family, life balance, and coursework (Mertes & Jankoviak, 2016). Muñoz et al. (2018) found that motivation was enhanced when students pursued and achieved their self-interests. These findings can serve as focal points for evaluating students' campus and relevant instructional strategies based on the ASP's goals. Anumba (2015) argued that success barriers and factors could be investigated to improve future instructional strategies that promote student engagement and persistence. Hutto (2017) also stressed the importance of student success in influencing students' overall quality of life. Failure to understand the patterns, barriers, and persistence factors among students impacts employability, increases criminality and obscures individual visions for a better life (Anumba, 2015; Hutto, 2017).

Implications

Through this study, I will explore the extent to which the ASP met its three qualitative objectives and KPIs to (a) improve student preparedness by integrating the 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum, (b) improve the student experience by

developing and implementing exemplary customer service, and (c) increase completion by providing continuous guidance and feedback to students. Possible findings include that the ASP met or even exceeded its qualitative objectives and KPIs, did not meet qualitative objectives, or achieved some intermediate levels of qualitative success. This project study may have implications for the various areas of education planning and programs. First, a new curriculum plan is one area for possible project development. A curriculum plan seems the least likely to be pursued, except in how 21st-century skillsets were integrated across the curriculum as imagined in the ASPs KPIs. The curriculum proper will not be a topic that I intend to explore. Second, the evaluation report is directly aligned with the program evaluation design of this study. Third, the policy recommendation could be appropriate to support institutional policies and programs. Thus, if appropriate, the evaluation report's required sections could be supplemented by selected elements of a policy recommendation to improve institutional programs and implementations. Fourth, a professional development project could be studied as a possible project implication to improve faculty and staff preparedness in implementing skillsets, customer service, and campus services training.

Summary

Colleges initiate student success programs to improve student completion rates and the quality of student experiences. Section 1 highlighted exemplary college initiatives including programs like the Student Success Course (SSC), College Discovery Program (CDP), and College-Wide Retention Program (CWRP). The problem with this study was that the SCCC-ASP had not been evaluated for the achievement of its qualitative

objectives by exploring the experiences and perspectives of students, faculty, and administrators. The study's rationale included SCCC's omission of qualitative information or data analyses in its annual reporting of the ASP's success. Because SCCC did not include its annual report in the program's qualitative goals, the purpose of the study was linked to the qualitative evaluation research of the achievement of SCCC's ASP objectives, including KPI #1.1.1, #1.2.1, and #1.3.2, as provided in Figure 1.

An extant literature review included a conceptual framework to ground the study and a review of the broader problem. Tinto's (1997) involvement theory tenets were introduced, recent research utilizing the theory was examined, and conceptualization of how the theory informed the research questions was introduced. Recent research literature highlighted 21st-century skills, higher education customer service, higher education student advising and feedback, adult students' motivations, unique needs, role conflicts, student and faculty relations, financial issues, institutional support systems, socio-economic considerations, and work-study scheduling challenges. As I discussed each topic in my review of the literature, I synthesized research findings and recommendations in terms of the current local problem and research purpose.

The paper's remaining sections include the methodology section, the project section, and my reflections and conclusions. The paper will end with a research-derived project in Appendix A. Section 2 (Methodology) includes the design and research approach, my plan for participant recruitment, data collection and analysis, study limitations, and data analysis results. Section 3 (The Project) will include introducing the project proper, including my rationale for choosing the project genre based on findings

and my review of literature related to the chosen genre. A project description, project evaluation plan, and project implications are also included in Section 3. Finally, Section 4 (Reflections and Conclusions) includes a discussion of project strengths and limitations; recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, project development, leadership, and change; reflections on the importance of the work; implications, applications, and directions for future research, and finally, the conclusions drawn from the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Method and Evaluation Research Design

This qualitative research aims to address an ASP evaluation gap by exploring student perspectives about their experiences related to these three unevaluated KPIs using a qualitative evaluation research design and approach. The three qualitative KPIs to be addressed in this study include (a) the school's integration of the 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum, (b) the school's implementation of exemplary customer service, and (c) the school's guidance and feedback provided to students to increase completion. This section presents and justifies the evaluation research design, which is summative to be conducted at the end of the program's life cycle to determine the overall program's effectiveness. I also present my plans for selecting participants, data collection and analysis, and protecting participants' rights.

Qualitative Summative Evaluation Research of the SCCC ASP

Because the SCCC-ASP contained criteria for enhancing stakeholders' experiences qualitatively, and those criteria have yet to be evaluated, I chose the qualitative summative evaluation research for my study's design. Using the evaluation research design will facilitate the summative inquiry about the qualitative aspects of the ASP from the perspectives and experiences of students. This evaluation research design will serve as a program assessment conducted at the end of the program's life cycle to determine the overall effectiveness. The overarching question to be addressed by this study seeks to fill the evaluation gap by developing an understanding of how SCCC ASP's qualitative objectives and related KPIs were perceived and experienced by the

students it served. Because the research questions seek to understand a phenomenon related to the subjective perceptions and experiences of the participants, and because the phenomenon is related to the qualitative aspects of an ASP implementation, a qualitative summative evaluation research design is an appropriate design choice for this study (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Quantitative research solves problems by measuring variables and subjecting those measures to statistical processes to determine relationships or differences between or between interest variables (Babbie, 2016; Burkholder et al., 2016). The ASP had already been evaluated by SCCC using quantitative means, and the only remaining goals of the ASP that had not been evaluated were the qualitative goals already discussed.

I will use the qualitative summative evaluation research design with individual open-ended interviews to clarify the experiences and perspectives of student participants. This qualitative evaluation research approach will bring insight, meaning, and richness to understanding the research phenomenon (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I will focus on the individual perspectives of my student participants' campus and classroom experiences to understand, describe, and interpret the extent to which the ASP achieved its qualitative goals. Compared to quantitative research, the advantage of this approach is that the researcher does not follow rigidly defined steps in the data collection process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This evaluation research design approach is characterized by a subjective investigation to collect and analyze narrative data to understand and describe the essence of participant experiences related to the research problem, purpose, and questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative summative

evaluation research uses an interpretative approach in presenting and reporting data that reflect the participants and the researcher's interaction during the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Justification of Research Design

The SCCC-ASP has not been evaluated to achieve its qualitative objectives and KPIs (see Figure 1). I will not use the quantitative approach because the nature of the study's problem is understanding how the SCCC-ASP achieved its qualitative goals and KPIs. The quantitative approach uses valid and reliable data-gathering techniques independent of the researcher's interpretation and subjective judgment. In this evaluation research study, the qualitative approach relies on the researcher as the data-gathering instrument, allowing for the researcher's interpretation and experience to guide the process (Burkholder et al., 2016). Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative study uses smaller sample sizes of participants whose individual narratives are coded for thematic analysis. To conduct my evaluative research study of SCCC's qualitative aspects of the ASP, I interviewed 12 student participants to collect qualitative data about individual perceptions regarding the inclusion of 21st-century skills across the curriculum, the quality of customer service experiences, and the extent to which advising, and feedback helped students attain their academic goals. Accordingly, I will focus my evaluation on student perspectives and perceptions related to the implementation of ASP's three qualitative goals and KPIs (see Figure 1). SCCC has evaluated and reported the quantitative aspects of the ASP (Flipsnack, 2016; Southwest City Central College, n.d.). The qualitative goals and KPIs related to 21st-century skills development,

customer service, and guidance and feedback have not yet been evaluated. Thus, this study's evaluation research related to the qualitative ASP objectives and KPIs is the appropriate design choice.

Qualitative and quantitative evaluation research has often favored goal-based evaluation, which is summative (Verschuren & Zsolnai, 1998). Program planners conducting goal-based evaluations use various indicators to determine whether the goals and overall program have been achieved (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). Caffarella and Daffron (2013) concluded that performance indicators might include data that suggest program efficacy or management practices that influenced organizational behaviors that pursued the program's defined goals. Patton (1994) argued that program evaluation seeks to improve something based on the defined objectives and goals. The purpose of evaluation research is to confirm goal attainment or recommend process improvement when it is found that its goals have not been obtained and achieved (Patton, 1994). Indicators of the qualitative ASP KPI outcomes will be the possible themes that will be unpacked from my thematic analysis of interview transcripts with student participants.

Participants

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Exploring to understand the SCCC ASP qualitative objectives and KPIs will require participation from students who have been part of SCCC during the ASP program's implementation during the period between 2016 and 2020 will be the first criterion for selecting the participants. In addition, to increase the chances that the student participants have sufficient experience to respond authentically during the interviews, I

will include only students who have at least two semesters at SCCC after being exposed to the ASP program. To make my sample as representative as possible, I tried to stratify participation based on gender with an equal number of females and males. However, since mostly women participants came up, I just asked whoever came forward to give consent for the interview.

Justification of the Number of Participants

Scholars and qualitative researchers are not united on the adequate number of participants necessary for qualitative data collection. According to Crouch and McKenzie (2016), the qualitative researcher establishes the appropriate number of participants to explore the phenomenon of interest based on the depth or time spent with and interviewing participants. In addition, the sampling process in qualitative research requires a purposive perspective to ensure saturation of the phenomenon of interest (Crouch & McKenzie, 2016). Babbie (2016) explained that a small sample selected purposefully from the target population may satisfy saturation. Latham (2014) argued that saturation typically requires at least 12 participants, and to have data beyond the point of saturation, 16 participants may be included. Therefore, in this qualitative study, I targeted a sample size of 12 student participants based on the stratification characteristics of gender (female and male if possible) and status (traditional versus NTS for students).

Gaining Access and Establishing Rapport

Gaining Access

Babbie (2016) recommended seeking approval from administrators where the study will be conducted by making direct and formal contact with the institution to

provide details about the purpose of the study and the steps that will be taken to protect participant rights. To ensure proper protocols in selecting participants for this study, I took the necessary steps to inform all stakeholders (applicable IRBs and administrators) before contacting the participants using the e-mail addresses of qualifying student-participants who provided consent from the flyers. According to SCCC's OIR, I must obtain SCCC IRB approval prior to beginning procedures for the recruitment of participants. For student participants, I posted a recruitment flyer (Appendix G) on SCCC campuses, and when contacted by students who expressed interest in the study, I sent the e-mail invitation with informed consent. According to Peoplepulse.com (n.d.), a typical response rate of 15-30% should be expected when sending invitations to general satisfaction surveys participating in qualitative research. Alternatively, the flyer invitations on the various campuses suffice to provide information for recruitment for the needed number of participants.

Establishing Researcher-Participant Rapport

According to Babbie (2016), the researcher is the primary instrument for conducting qualitative research. The rapport that I established with my participants provided the most effective and reliable interview process and data collection. Initial contact was set up at a mutually acceptable interview time using the preferred email address and phone number that the participants provided in the informed consent. To help ensure data reliability, I followed my interview protocol script closely. Accordingly, each interview began with reviewing the participant's rights by going over the informed

consent. Once these initial steps were completed and the participant was ready to proceed, I asked the first interview question on my approved interview protocol.

Measures for Protecting Participant Rights

Ethical protocols must be followed to protect participants' rights. I observed the ethical research standards for conducting social science research with human participants. Accordingly, as shown in Appendix F, I have completed the training course on Protecting Human Research Participants through the National Institute of Health (PHRP Training, 2017). The primary tool for communicating participants' rights and voluntary participation is the informed consent form, where the participants will become aware of the possible risks involved (Babbie, 2016, p. 65). Accordingly, I introduced the research and provided the participants with the required informed consent information in my initial e-mail invitation. I only included participants that I received an informed consent form- from. As an ethical researcher, I am bound to protect participants' confidentiality. I secured the participants' informed consent and all digital data on a password-protected home computer in a dedicated research folder. All research residue, including handwritten notes, was stored in a locked metal file cabinet in my home office.

Data Collection

Rubin and Babbie (2016) emphasized using in-depth, detailed interviews to collect qualitative data. Ravitch and Carl (2016) supported a semi-structured approach to unpack thick, rich information using focused fixed questions and appropriate follow-up questions. After I obtained IRB approvals from Walden University IRB (approval #09-29-21-0722807) and SCCC (exp. 12/29/2022), I distributed fliers to in public spaces on

seven different SCCC campuses. Students who were interested in participating in my research notified me by text using the phone number that was shared in the flier. In response, I texted each student a weblink to my survey on Survey Monkey (Appendix D) and asked them to complete the survey. The purpose of the survey was to collect demographic information for me to select students who qualified based on select-in criteria for participation. The survey also contained the informed consent form, which notified me automatically by email each time consent was granted. Once I verified that the student who granted informed consent actually qualified for participation (at least 18 years old and at least two semesters in the college between 2016 and 2020), I texted that student to share my email address to facilitate communication and to schedule the interview.

As per Babbie (2016), I relied on individual interviews to explore the participants' lived experiences related to the phenomena under investigation. As reflected in my three research questions, my interview protocol (Appendix E) focused on (a) the college's integration of 21st-century skill sets across the curriculum, (b) the customer service that the students experienced, and (c) the guidance and feedback they experienced. I created my interview protocol in consultation with my research committee. According to Vogl (2013) and affirmed by Farooq (n.d.), I used telephone calls to conduct interviews. During the telephone interviews, I used a separate digital recording application, REV.com, to capture the audio interview. The only other data collection instrument I used was a legal pad to capture field notes with my impressions as each interview progressed (i.e., field notes). The REV.com application is a paid, professional

transcription service that captures the audio during the interview. After each interview, I logged into my REV.com account and downloaded the transcription for thematic data analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Babbie, 2016).

When not actively using the research computer digital files or hand-written materials (i.e., paper residue), I stored them in a locked file cabinet. In accordance with Walden University policy for the maintenance of research data, I will preserve my research data on the dedicated computer and locked file cabinet for 5 years. After that time, I will destroy the paper data by shredding it. The locked file cabinet's keys will be stored in a fireproof safe within my house. The backup of my digital research data is a 2 TB USB drive dedicated to this work, and I stored it separately in the fire-proof safe with cabinet keys. Implementing these storage system strategies will protect my research data and also help ensure my participants' confidentiality. The digital recording procedures also ensured compliance with the COVID-19 pandemic requirements for safety.

According to Amankwaa (2016), researchers using a qualitative method must establish completeness, trustworthiness, and rigor. Amankwaa stressed the importance of spending sufficient time observing, interviewing, and adequately caring for data collection residue to achieve these goals during data collection. These sentiments were expressed earlier by Golafshani (2003), who stressed the importance of the qualitative researcher's techniques for establishing and preserving the study's credibility.

Accordingly, Golafshani suggested that qualitative research's credibility lies in how the researcher establishes interviewer rapport, the consistency of applying the interview plan, and the transparency of sharing findings for member checking. Because we deal with

human participants with individual circumstances, feelings, and moods, I recorded participants' subjective experiences as they were shared without bias or manipulation. According to Connelly (2016), journal reflections help researchers track the changes and instability factors affecting the data collection process. Accordingly, I used my field notes as a journal to record my reflections during the interview and to monitor changes within me, as well as perceived changes in my participants during the data collection process. As the researcher, I must evaluate the different changes in my feelings and moods that may affect my interpretation and judgment. Both Connelly and Golafshani noted that interrelationship changes between the researcher and the participants during the research process could affect the qualitative data and impact the study's trustworthiness. Thus, journal reflections in my field notes helped me track both the participants and me.

Data Analysis

Data analysis started when I examined each participant's demographic profile, including age and number of semesters or years as a student in the college, to stratify the sample. According to Amankwaa (2016), accuracy and credibility have to do with the trustworthiness of findings. To achieve trustworthiness, I used standard qualitative research strategies, including member checks, peer debriefing, and clarifying any researcher bias (Connelly, 2016; Golafshani, 2003).

Connelly (2016) supported keeping track of the participants' conditions as one way to preserve the data's trustworthiness. After I downloaded each transcription from the REV.com service, I scanned the transcription initially to ascertain accuracy while the interview was still fresh from memory. Then, using Saldaña's (2016) coding process, I

used the four steps to analyze the data. In the first step, I generated the list of codes by reading each interview transcript multiple times (Saldaña, 2016). In the second step, I combined codes into categories. In the third step, I interpreted the categories into themes. In the last step, I connected the themes with the extant literature on my topic to answer the research questions (Saldaña, 2016).

Once I analyzed each interview transcript, I sent it back to the relevant participant to conduct member checking for both the transcription accuracy and their impressions of initial subthemes for accuracy based on their interview. In accordance with my data analysis plan, my intention was to call or text any participant to clarify discrepant data. This situation occurred in one instance where the participant may not have qualified because they had already matriculated into a university from SCCC. In this case, the participants explained that they had applied to and been accepted into the university but had not yet started for personal reasons. Therefore, the participants' data were retained for my data analysis. Otherwise, all 12 participants confirmed that they had reviewed and approved the transcripts.

Peer debriefing is used by qualitative researchers to engage a neutral member or a colleague who is not involved in the study and can also be useful in identifying and resolving discrepant cases (Amankwaa, 2016). Peer debriefing can also be beneficial by allowing the researcher to view their data analysis through someone else's eyes (Saldaña, 2016). Data analysis concludes when saturation is achieved (Saunders et al., 2018). According to Saunders et al. (2018), the goal of saturation is to develop a complete understanding of the phenomenon based on the rich description of the participants'

experiences and is reached when new themes cannot be unpacked (Saunders et al., 2018). For the purposes of my study, I consulted with my research committee Chair who served as my peer debriefer throughout my data analysis process.

Limitations

The evaluation study covered not all ASP program areas or the college's historical data documentation but only the ASP proper which involved qualitative aspects for enhancing student experiences. The scope of my research was delimited to the qualitative aspects of the SCCC-ASP. In line with my three research questions, I included student participants' perceptions and experiences about (a) how SCCC has integrated 21st-century skills and skillsets within the curriculum, (b) customer service, and (c) the quality of guidance and feedback experienced by the students. The college's quantitative KPI metrics of interest were previously evaluated and were not included in this qualitative study. The extent to which qualitative studies are transferable to other settings depends on the degree to which those other settings are similar to the setting that was studied (Golafshani, 2003). For this reason, I have provided a comprehensive overview of the SCCC-ASP, college characteristics, and student demographics in Section 1.

Data Analysis Results

Data Gathering Process

To generate interview data, I posted IRB-approved research fliers at various locations on the college's multiple system campuses. The fliers included a brief description of the research, the criteria for participation, and the promise of a \$10 gift card for participating. Students responded through my personal phone by texting their

interests and providing their email addresses. Initially, I called each participant by phone to verify that they qualified to participate, and if so, I provided the SurveyMonkey website link for them to review the informed consent form and opt in by moving to the survey or opt out by not completing the survey. The purpose of the survey was to verify participation criteria, including enrollment during two semesters over which the ASP was in place. Once the participation criteria had been verified using the survey, I immediately contacted each participant by text to schedule the interviews. I conducted each interview following my approved interview plan and recorded each interview using the REV.com transcription service. The shortest interview was 45 minutes, and the longest interview was 1 hour and 15 minutes. After each interview, I requested a transcription and was notified by Rev.com when each transcript was available for download. I then logged onto the Rev.com website using my password-protected user ID and downloaded the transcript directly onto my password-protected computer.

I organized the 12 transcripts by student name and coded them from Participant 01 (P01) through Participant 12 (P12). During this first step of coding, I also created an MS Word file for each participant. Initially, the document consisted of a single section for each participant's transcript organized in a two-column by three-row table. The first column contained the interview transcript, and the second column was used to capture keywords from the interview related to the research question. The three rows were used for the three research questions. I read and re-read each interview, each time trying to capture new relevant keywords in the right-hand column. This process was repeated numerous times for each participant until no new keywords could be unpacked.

After I completed my work by identifying keywords using the 2 X 3 table, I inserted a new section above the table to capture and explain my initial impressions and emerging subthemes for member checking. This section was organized using a more narrative format, again using the three RQs, so that participants could follow the logic I used to unpack my initial impressions and emerging subthemes. As I completed my work with each MS Word file, I emailed them back to the participants for member checking. One participant responded with agreement, another participant responded that they would need to read the transcript but never responded after that, and none of the other participants responded at all. I then concluded the member-checking phase of the study and moved on to in-depth data analysis.

After member checking, I continued with data analysis by creating an MS Excel file with three worksheets, one for each RQ. Each worksheet consisted of 13 rows. The participants were listed down the left side, and categories were listed in the top row based on the data analysis I completed using the MS Word files. Participant quotations were pasted from the MS Word file under relevant category columns while highlighting relevant keywords from the quotations. Completing this process for all three RQs allowed for a convenient way to count the frequency of similar responses under each category, thereby solidifying subthemes.

Prior to reporting findings based on the research problem and questions, it is important to report the demographics of the sample to understand better the perspectives of those who participated in the study (Hammer, 2011; Robson, 2011). Table 1 presents the 12 participants' demographics in terms of the student's age, gender, and the overall

emotional experience shared by each student about their time at SCCC. The general feeling was that the students were happy, satisfied, and excited about their overall experience at SCCC, with only one student (P1) expressing frustration.

Table 1

Participant Demographics and Level of Satisfaction with SCCC

Participant	Age	Gender	Academic discipline	Academic goal	Emotional experience
P1	26	Male	Computer science	University transfer with 2-year degree	Frustrated
P2	28	Female	Psych-OC	University transfer with 2-year degree	Happy
P3	X	Female	Nursing	University transfer with 2 year degree	Happy
P4	X	Female	Psychology	University transfer with 2 year degree	Satisfied and happy
P5	25	Female	Education	University transfer with 2 year degree	Satisfied and happy
P6	25	Female	Education	Associate degree in education	Excited but finding difficulties
P7	27	Female	Nursing	University transfer with 2-year degree (Nursing)	Happy and wonderful experience
P8	28	Female	Multidisciplinary	University transfer with 2-	Satisfied and happy

				year degree (digital media)	
P9	20	Female	Pre-requisite course	University transfer with 2-year degree	Satisfied and helpful
P10	30	Female	Biology	University transfer with 2 year degree	Happy and prepared
P11	26	Female	Criminal justice	University transfer with 2 year degree	Satisfied and happy
P12	X	Male	Multidisciplinary study	University transfer with 2 year degree	Satisfied and happy

Note: X = Missing data.

Thematic Findings Based on the Research Problem and RQs

The research problem for this study was that although the five KPIs for SCCC's ASP had been evaluated by the college's research office, the qualitative KPIs had not been evaluated using established research protocols. The qualitative KPIs focused on student experiences related to (a) SCCC's integration of 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness (KPI #1.1.1), (b) SCCC's implementation of exemplary customer service for students (KPI #1.2.1), and (c) SCCC's goal to provide continuous guidance and feedback to facilitate completion of completion degrees, certificates, and awards (KPI #1.3.2). The three RQs were informed by the three KPIs and are provided as follows:

RQ1: What are SCCC student perspectives and experiences about integrating 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness during the effective dates of the ASP?

RQ2: How do SCCC students perceive and experience the college's customer services in terms of improving the college experience for students?

RQ3: What are SCCC student perceptions and experiences about guidance and feedback provided to or received by students to facilitate the attainment of their career interests and goals?

According to its mission statement, the mission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is to “assure the education quality and improve the effectiveness of its member institutions” ((SACSCOC, 2018, para 2)). While SCCC’s institutional research office had already focused on the quantitative aspects of evaluating the ASP’s effectiveness, student perspectives and experiences relative to quality enhancement plan’s qualitative KPIs remained an important aspect of college effectiveness that was yet to be explored.

Theme for RQ1: 21st Century Skills Important for College, Career, and Life

Success

Because all the skills mentioned by participants are important to academic, career, and life success, the overarching theme for RQ1 was determined to be 21st Century Skills for College, Career, and Life Success. While not referred to by participants as 21st century skills, as demonstrated in this section, the skills mentioned by the participants can be referred to collectively in this way. Based on the participant interviews for RQ1, I

developed eight subthemes that represent 21st century skills based on a frequency count of how many times each skill was mentioned during the interviews. Table 2 presents these subthemes as helpful skills in preparing students at SCCC for academic, career, and life success.

Table 2

RQ1: 21st Century Skill Subthemes by Frequency of Mention

Subthemes & subtheme categories	Participant involvement	Number of mentions
Oral Communication	P3, P4, P5, P9, P10, P11, P12	12
Teamwork, Project management, & collaboration	P3, P4, P7, P9, P11	10
Time Management	P1, P4, P6, P9, P12	5
Computers & Technology	P1, P5, P6, P8, P12	8
Critical Thinking	P3, P4, P10	3
Writing	P4, P5, P10	4
Experiential Learning	P2, P7	3
Leadership	P2, P6	3

I also entered those subthemes into a free online word cloud generator (freewordcloud.com) to generate a word cloud based on the frequency of mentions by the participants. These words highlighted the significant skills that participants mentioned during the interviews generating a visual representation of the more frequent subthemes, including oral communication, teamwork, collaboration, and project management. In

some cases, hyphens were used to combine two words because the two-word combinations were needed for the word cloud input process. The resulting word cloud is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Word Cloud of 21st Century Skill Subthemes



Importance of Oral Communication

Oral communication was the dominant skill mentioned by the students. Seven participants (P3, P4, P5, P9, P10, P11, & P12) shared that SCCC had been great in developing good oral communication skills. Two students emphasized oral communication and the importance of public speaking skills. Participant 3, an international student, said, “I come from a different culture, from different environment, I need to communicate better with my professors and my fellow students.” She emphasized the need to learn communication skills, and she was grateful that SCCC has emphasized this in the curriculum. Participant 4 affirmed this experience, saying, “I learned public

speaking, writing presentations, class reports, and group work.” Participant 5 expressed this sentiment being an international student as well, “at least for me in my real life, when I go out somewhere with some friends ... this little bit helps too...[because] I think first my language I've come from a foreign language, so English as my second language.” Participant 7 affirmed that need, saying, “If you do not have good communication skills, it is most likely that you're not going to be able to fit in, you're not going to be able to communicate.” Participant 10 shared this: “I would say SCCC has really done good on my communication skills...I've been an international student when I came into the country. My communications skills are way back.” She added, SCCC “was giving different experience...it has really broadened my scope of communication.” Participant 12 somehow concluded that SCCC “gave me in the courses that I took...communication and confidence.” These experiences by the participants affirmed how students at SCCC learned oral communication as a necessary skill while at the college, at the same time, helped them prepare for their career and life goals.

The Value of Project Management Skills, Teamwork, and Collaboration

Project management skills, teamwork, and collaboration were the second set of skills the participants found significant at SCCC, which prepares them for academic, career, and life success skills as well. Six participants out of 12 (P3, P4, P6, P8, P9, & P11) shared that they learned how to work as a team in group work and projects. Participant 3, a nursing student, said, “I learned a lot of group work on how to work together. I used to work with people with diverse characters and personalities.” Participant 4 mentioned similar thing: “I learned to develop teamwork, group project,

skill in Project management.” Participant 6 related his story that [in] “humanities class...I've had to do a group project.” Participant 8 shared this: “I think one of the biggest and most complicated things that I had to learn was working in teams. I know that it's not usually that complicated, but many of the classes required having to work with others.” She added, “we had to work with communication, make sure she did her part, [I] make sure I did my part.” Participant 9 shared her story: “in some cases we have some teachers who recommend us to do a group project to ensure we come out with the project [learning] the collaboration skills in doing the projects.” She explained that doing group project or collaboration, “everybody comes up to work and has a common goal, a task, to be successful..., it means we cannot do it individually.” Participant 11 recalled, “whenever I was in SCCC, I had a very good experience, I have to do group work...it would be very challenging, especially with different times that we all have free and whatnot [free].” The participants’ experiences regarding project management, teamwork, or collaboration portrayed what SCCC did to students in the classroom, somehow simulating workplace preparedness, how to handle collaborative projects, and essentially working together as a team.

The Relevance of Time Management

Managing our time was the third set of skills participants found significant in their studies at SCCC skills that promote better academic, career, and life success. Five (P4, P6, P9, P11, & P12) among the 12 participants shared their stories of how time management helped them improve their academic and college life. Participant 4 said, “in SCCC, I learned time management, especially since I was taking more than one class at a

time. Each professor in each class emphasizes time management as essential to success, not only in the profession but in daily life.” She added, “I developed how to budget my time from waking up to my school hours on campus, my study time, and time to make assignments.” Participant 6 said, “The college sets up expectations, and I learned time management.” This participant added that it was important not to over-extend oneself to increase the quality of work. Participant 9 attested that “I do think time management was something that I had to learn and self-paced was something else that I had to learn as well. So, it's kind of adjusting to being in an online environment.” Participant 11 shared her story with this struggle doing student work and job: “whenever I was in SCCC, I didn't know how to manage my time, especially because I had to work and go to school. So, I didn't know how to do that. But I have improved, and I did learn what works for me and what doesn't.” Participant 12 shared that “Time management, like being in class on time, actually leaving on time, [is a kind of] flexibility of learning one skillset, then another, and adapting to the different environments also if we had to go to a lab or go to the class.”

Clearly, with these three major skills participants experienced at SCCC, and with most participants thought that their experiences at SCCC, participants affirmed that oral communication, teamwork, project management, collaboration, and time management were the 21st century skills that helped them prepare for academic, career, and life success.

The Necessity of Acquiring Computer and Technology Skills

Computer and technology skills were unpacked as important 21st-century skills that were learned and developed among students during their stay at SCCC. These skills helped them improve their academic success and, at the same time, prepared them for career and life success. Three (P1, P5, & P6) students out of 12 affirmed that SCCC helped students' preparedness by acquiring various 21st-century skills. The first participant had his story said, "I experience using Microsoft programs like Microsoft Word, Microsoft Outlook, a bunch of micros suite --learning the business side." Participant 5 shared this sentiment by saying, "Right now [I am] more [on] technology like online [in] my program ... connect with the computer science, so I was taking the C+ [programming] class so that's a little bit helping with ... high tech" Participant 6 affirmed the experience by sharing, "I learned about digital literacy from the college. We're in a technological age and everything. And personally, I feel like I grew up with the internet." She added, "I think technology-wise, it's advancing, so I would think to incorporate more technology-wise with doing things." Computer and technology skills emerged as the fourth most frequently discussed subtheme for the 21st-century skills theme. This computer and technology literacy skillset prepares students at SCCC for future career tasks and workplace demands.

The Value of Critical Thinking Skills

Academic success demands critical thinking skills and eventually prepares their future career. The value of critical thinking at school and the workplace contributes importantly to life success (Halx & Reybold, 2006; Wright, 2019). While only three

participants (P3, P4, & P10) mentioned the subtheme of critical thinking, it was clear from their observation that it was an important topic for them. Participant 3, who was in a nursing program, said, “The prerequisites were geared towards healthcare, and I learned critical thinking...how to critically think and answer questions critically finding the differences, contradictions, and possible results if I do this, or I do that.” Participant 4, preparing for a psychology degree, mentioned, “I’m getting a psychology degree. What stood important I learned at SCCC for this degree is... critical thinking” Participant 10 shared, “I learned a lot of skills, including critical reasoning, because the way I viewed things was different before I started in SCCC. ... [Now] I ... look at things ... critically before I make a conclusion.” As shared by participants' narrative citations, as well most institutions of higher learning emphasize critical thinking in the classrooms (Halx & Reybold, 2006; Saleh, 2019; Wright, 2019), critical thinking is an important 21st-century skill and a subtheme that emerged from my data analysis.

Writing Skills for Academic, Career, and Life-Success

Writing skills were mentioned by 3 participants (P4, P5, & P10) as significant skills learned while at SCCC to succeed in academic, career, and life. Participant 4, who was an international student, affirmed that “I learned public speaking, writing presentations, class reports, and group work.” Participant 5 was another international student who shared her difficulty in adjusting to English. She shared how her first language affected her writing. She said, “I think first [with] my language. Because I've come from a foreign language, [and] English as my second language.” Related to writing presentations and research papers, Participant 10, another international student, said,

“Through the years with SCCC, [I have been] giving different presentations... we have a lot of research papers done as well. We have a lot of writing, a lot of essays... I believe all these writings edits, and all this assignment given has improved my skills.” Writing is an important skill for communicating in the 21st century (Motallebzadeh et al., 2018; Powell, 2013), and it emerged as a subtheme that was especially important for SCCC students whose native language was not English.

Importance of Experiential Learning, On-the-Job-Training, and Fieldwork

Experiential Learning, On-the-job training, and Fieldwork were important skills that two students (P2 & P7) mentioned in their sharing. While only two participants mentioned these skills, I included them as related subthemes because the literature is replete with information on their importance in teaching and learning (Dakhi et al., 2020; DeGiacomo, 2002; Genelza, 2022; Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Sui et al., 2020; Wurdinger & Allison, 2017). Participant 2, a pre-medical field student, expressed satisfaction with the fieldwork she had experienced. She noted that going to job sites was an important learning experience. She said, “As a result, I have had hands-on experience connecting with patients and children.” Participant 7, another nursing student, shared a similar sentiment saying, “I mean, skills like knowing how to take vital signs, knowing how to ambulate a patient, knowing how to change fully catheter, knowing how to give an injection, and knowing how to assess a patient [were great learning experiences]”. She emphasized the importance of on-the-job-training. She said, “During my clinical days, I had the opportunity to work with Ben Taub Hospital, Lyndon B General Hospital, under the supervision of my professor from SCCC, and we did some hands-on and at the lab as

well.” While experiential learning opportunities are common among medical and nursing students (DeGiacomo, 2002; Doggrell & Schaffer, 2016; Dornan et al., 2019; Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Sui et al., 2020; Wurdinger & Allison, 2017), it seems that other disciplines would benefit from including similar kinds of learning opportunities for their students as well.

The Relevance of Developing Leadership Skills

Two participants mentioned leadership skills (P2 & P6). Participant 2 shared about leadership skills she learned, “I am ██████████ College's student government association president; I have been very big when it comes to problem-solving for students; I have been gigantic when it comes to communication when setting meetings with the president at the college.” Participant 6 expressed, “I'm interested in applying for a leadership position for the international student group, for the community for some position to do the kind of leadership... if there is an opportunity to do that.” Both students stressed the importance of their leadership development during college and higher education affords unique opportunities for students to experience leadership roles (Astuti et al., 2019; French, 2017; McGunagle & Zizka, 2020; Nica, 2013). For these reasons, leadership was unpacked as the eighth and final subtheme for RQ1 under the main theme of 21st Century Skills for Academic, Career, and Life Success.

The theme for RQ2: Personal Skills Facilitate Excellence in Customer Service

The second research question explored how SCCC students perceived and experienced college customer services to improve students' college experiences. The second RQ was derived from SCCC's QEP, KPI #1.2.1: The implementation of

exemplary customer service for students. The overarching theme for RQ2, *staff, and faculty personal skills facilitate excellence in customer service*, was unpacked from the thematic analysis of transcripts organized around the five categories summarized in Table 3. All participants in this study confirmed that at least one of the customer categories had improved their college experience. A discussion organized by those categories is provided in this section to demonstrate the theme unpacked for RQ2.

Table 3

RQ2: Categories by Frequency of Mention

Categories	Participant involvement	Number of mentions
Staff & Faculty Services	P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P11, P12	12
Financial Aid Services	P1, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9	16
Academic Advising and Related Services	P1, P4, P6, P9	5
Registration & Enrollment	P1, P4, P7, P10	7
Library Services	P6, P10, P12	3

Staff and Faculty Services

One significant area for participants' experiences was the services of staff and faculty members both on campus and in the classroom. Seven participants (P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P11, & P12) mentioned the importance of customer service provided by faculty and staff. Participant 2 said, "There is a lot of staff and faculty that are very

knowledgeable and know things...they give you the information that you need, and if they can't, they direct you to somebody that can." She added, "Everybody [staff and faculty] is knowledgeable. Everybody knows the correct resources to refer me to For me as a student, it makes life easier, it makes classes less stressful, and so forth."

Participant 3 shared similar sentiments. She said, "With the customer service, I've never had a negative experience, [including] interactions with my professors and advisors ... I've always been treated like I'm important." Participant 4 shared this about teachers at SCCC, "Ever from the beginning to the end, my experience with all my teachers was that all wanted us to succeed. They didn't just go and teach the class. They wanted you to learn and apply what you learned in class." Participant 6 shared her story: "I think that the staff really does take time to speak to the students that come into their area and just ask about what they have going on." Participant 8 shared her front desk experience:

It might be super insignificant for the customer service person, but it was super significant for me. I was running late for a test, and I was freaking out. I was studying so hard, and I got there early. I was running, and then, right by the entrance, I realized that I didn't have a pen or a pencil. Hey, I'm so sorry. Oh, it wasn't just the pencil. It was a Scantron. I forgot to purchase a freaking Scantron. I went to the front desk, and I was freaking out, and the girl was there. She was super helpful. She was like, "It's okay, it's okay." In other words, this staff handed them [pencil and scantron] to me, and she was like, "Just go, just go."

Participant 10 shared about helpful professors and faculty members as well, saying, "Frankly, faculty and professors are very nice and helpful." Participant 11's perspective

was slightly different and still positive. She said, “I think I always just want to be treated with a good attitude. So that's my thing. Like, if you treat me well, I think that's great. Yes, they were [great], from the people selling stuff to the people accepting my financial aid.” Participant 12 told her story about teachers who started the class by asking what the students felt about the previous assignment. She recalled the teacher asking, “How did we feel about the assignment that we read, or how did we feel about doing the work assignment?” This participant added, “I love how my teachers would keep in contact with me, like how am I feeling about the course, how am I doing, do I have any questions or concerns.” Clearly, acknowledging students’ experiences and communicating empathy for their learning challenges was appreciated and acknowledged as important in facilitating excellent customer service from faculty and staff. The subthemes of acknowledging student experiences and communicating empathy, therefore were unpacked as important personal skills from this category.

Financial Aid Services

Six participants (P1, P4, P6, P7, P8, & P9) out of 12 shared how financial aid services helped them with their campus needs while at SCCC. Participant 1 said, “Financial aid [office] has been helpful throughout the course of what I needed to finish my degree.” Participant 4 noted, “They helped me a lot since the beginning ... [from] the registration process to financial aid.” Participant 5 shared her experience, saying, “Yeah, I would say usually it comes with whenever I go to the financial aid office, speak with them in regard to my status and things like that.” She further said, “They [financial aid office staff members] do always try to communicate with me that it's not an easy

process.” Participant 7 mentioned, “I would have to call the financial aid office and they made it so easy for me so that I didn't have to drive all the way to the school to get the information I needed.” She added “Each time I call, I have an awesome experience.” Participant 8’s experience, unlike those shared by her student peers, was not as positive. She felt that the staff was not that approachable and friendly, and thought that the staff person for helping with her Free Application for Federal Student Aid [FAFSA] did not always resolve her financial aid concern. She said, “The only complicated one that I can remember was the FAFSA one... [because] “the lady at the cash clerk area...wasn't able to respond as friendly per se... [because FAFSA is] complicated on its own. [but] I was still able to get the job done.” Participant 9 summed up the experience by saying, “I think the financial aid office was pretty helpful with students and giving them a good explanation of things.” The skill of active listening (Low & Hammett, 2019) an important subtheme unpacked from these student stories. Without active listening to fully understand each student’s financial aid challenge, it would not be possible to deliver the exemplary customer service related by the students under this category. When stress levels are high, then active listening becomes more difficult. Staff mastery of the FAFSA process could mitigate stress and activate the personal skill of active listening. Therefore, stress management is another personal skill that staff and faculty may find useful (Low & Hammett, 2019).

Academic Advising and Related Services

In areas of academic advising, four participants (P1, P4, P6, & P9) discussed their experiences in academic advising services. Participant 1 had this general comment

saying, “I’ve had pretty satisfying academic advising experiences.” When pressed further, however, P1 shared a less than satisfactory experience, stating,

I do think they need to do a better job helping the students find their career path, like the degree plan with what they're going to be doing. They just told me to get an associate in science, but they didn't realize that I was going for a bachelor's in computer science.

Other comments from P1 demonstrated a similar need for personal responsibility for one’s own education outcomes. In general, P1’s comments relative to his dissatisfaction with his SCCC experience were out of character compared with the comments shared by the other 11 participants. Participant 4 shared a similar affirmation “I actually did find that at SCCC and that I have no complaints [about customer services] ...neither with the registration, financial aid, or the advising offices.” Participant 6 mentioned her experience with advisers, saying, “I’ve even had advisers...giving me motivational speeches” and added, “because being a college student isn't always easy. She had introduced me... to the career center...to build a resume and all these things.” Participant 9 noted, “I think advising and the financial aid were the most helpful” These four participants held up academic advising and to a lesser degree (career center services as the most satisfying customer experiences they had at SCCC. While not every student will need these services, when delivered with empathy and respect, academic advising and related services can be the most impactful of all customer experiences for students who need them (Chandra et al., 2019; Duggleby et al., 2016; Hwang & Choi, 2019).

Therefore, related to the overall theme of staff and faculty personal skills for excellence in customer service, empathy and respect remain important subthemes.

Registration & Enrollment Services

Four participants (P1, P4, P7, & P10) discussed the important services provided by registration and enrollment teams. Participant 1 was quite discontented with the enrollment and registration process because he was asked to enroll in courses that, based on his interpretation applications of those disciplines, did not meet his career plans. As an example, he shared that he was required to take math courses that he would not use in his eventual degree goal of a BS in computer science. Participant 4 mentioned “When I had just finished high school, I started my transfer to SCCC. I went to two different [SCCC] campuses...; they helped me a lot [especially the] registration and financial aid offices.” Participant 4 affirmed additional satisfaction with enrollment services, noting that “I actually did find that [satisfaction with customer services] at SCCC and that I have no complaints with their registration [process].” Participant 7 shared about her experience during enrollment: “the enrollment process was awesome because I had a good understanding [about the process] and good people [staff] with knowledge of how it [registration] works and that made it so easy for me.” Participant 10 also shared a similar experience about enrollment, “Yes. Yes. They have amazing staff there. When it's time to enroll for classes, I normally go to the school to seek assistance, and the people there are helpful.” Taking time to help students with their enrollment needs seemed to communicate a helpful, caring attitude from the registration and enrollment staff. A caring attitude, therefore, was unpacked as an important subtheme under the registration

and enrollment category. The personal skills of active listening (empathy) and assertive communication facilitate a caring attitude (Low & Hammett, 2019).

Library Services

During the interview, three participants (P6, P10, & P12) addressed SCCC library services as an important customer service. Participant 6 mentioned how she was helped with her library needs, saying, “I feel like every time I walk in there, they're always very helpful.” Participant 10 shared a similar sentiment: “When I go to the library, the librarians are very kind. They ensure we are okay and we always study. And the atmosphere as well, I think it's encouraging.” Participant 12 said, “When I finally visited the library, oh, the lady was so helpful. She showed me where everything was.” The participant added that [the lady] took her time to make sure all the students were okay. She said, “She came to me and took her time, showing me step by step.” Again, a caring attitude and showing empathy, both previous subthemes, were necessary for delivering excellent library services through the eyes of these participants.

Theme for RQ3: Proactive use of technology facilitate guidance and feedback.

The third research question explored student perceptions on how they experienced SCCC staff and employees providing guidance and feedback to facilitate the goal attainment and career interests. RQ3 was derived from SCCC's goal to provide continuous guidance and feedback to facilitate completion of degrees, certificates, and awards (KPI #1.3.2).

Twelve participants agreed that SCCC faculty and services staff provided guidance and feedback related to their academic career interests and goals. However,

P1's negative narrative in RQ1 was mostly repeated for RQ3. While P1 offered no new examples to illustrate not receiving adequate guidance or feedback, he repeated the examples of his having to enroll in what he perceived as irrelevant courses and his adviser's lack of knowledge about his plan to pursue a 4-year degree in computer science. As illustrated below, however, P1 did have a positive experience related to financial aid guidance. Otherwise, the negative experiences and feelings shared by P1 were discrepant compared to those of the other 11 participants.

Participant 2 affirmed that SCCC did good in providing guidance and feedback to students to maintain academic performance. Referring to the feedback she received from her professors, P2 said, "overall, feedback-wise, experience-wise, with the monitoring stuff, I get good feedback." Participant 3 shared,

I'm an international student. I have an international advisor separate from my academic advisor. My international advisor...was always making sure that I was on top of my game [in all my classes]. Making sure I meet the [program] requirements, making sure I graduate in time, making sure I'm not lagging in any way.

In short, her experience with her international advisor was very positive and she had a lot of praise and positive feedback relative to those advising experiences.

Participant 4 discussed how her teachers facilitated her academic progress. P4 said,

I ... was originally planning to become a nurse. I had a teacher that always gave me feedback on what to do and how to do it. And if I ever needed a reference

letter, they were there. Now I'm going for psychology, I had two psychology teachers who gave me feedback [guidance] to help me decide on going into psychology.

For P4, instructor feedback that facilitated an academic discipline change excited her about both her academics and future career psychology.

Participant 5 was very positive about feedback that was shared by the college electronically, especially through email. P5 noted, "The school email [was] pretty helpful because they always send you something ... that you might be interested in ... related to your program area." She also praised her instructors for sharing information. She continued, "Professors have some events or fairs that you might be interested in [like] if you are doing computer science...computer competition so you can attend. It's kind of helping your career" Participant 5 also shared her experience with the registrar during admission saying, "[the registrar] was really helping a lot. These two years [have] been...a lot of doing online, ...I needed to review my documents ... [they] helped [me] always." Similarly, P6 also highlighted information that was provided through the college's student portal. P6 shared, "I'm more visual ... [I like what] the college was able to provide for me online... [information that] kept me on track about my degree ... to keep me motivated...." Participant 10 related a similar experience with the admissions and enrollment office, sharing, "for me, I've experienced a situation where I have not registered for the class. And I will see the follow-up email reminding me to register for classes before it's too late. So, I think that is good." These participants thought

information that was shared online was crucial for providing career guidance while at SCCC.

Participant 7 interpreted the discussion about career goals more in terms of academic success. She said her advisors kept on motivating her, and she thought, “They don't want you to keep failing, failing, failing, and failing out.” Participant 8 felt the same way in terms of academic and career success being synonymous. She said, “So if you are failing in class, once you fail the first exam, they will call you, they will meet with you so ... to figure [something] out.” Participant 9 shared experiences with the college’s career planning and academic advising offices. She said, “they did help me guide through with what I needed. Even after I would call them, they would still email me to make sure that everything was answered.” She indicated satisfaction with SCCC in communicating to students regarding their status. P9 explained, “I was satisfied with that as well. They did a pretty good job explaining to students any questions or concerns that they had. Participant 10 affirmed in a similar way regarding her advisors. P10 said, “They are doing good as well because they reach out to you to ensure your classes; if you've taken the classes that you're supposed to take, they communicate through email.” Participant 11 also talked about her experience with her academic advisor, saying, “I had my [academic] counselor. He was very helpful, [and] very flexible with what times I could go...that helped me a lot.” Participant 12 commented on the value of communication in providing students with important feedback and guidance. She said, “I guess, ...[students] need [with] up to date [approach] with...with our youth, in order for you to know a positive way and the correct way to talk to them and communicate to them.” Academic and career advising directly

from instructors, through email, and over the phone were all mentioned by these students as feedback that left an impression and helped them toward their career goals.

As noted by P1, P10, and P12, feedback and guidance from financial services are important for helping them achieve their goals. To the extent that degree completion can facilitate career achievement, financial services were integral to helping participants (P1, P10, and P12) to finish their program. These participants shared their stories of how financial aid services facilitated their academic and degree completion. Participant 1 said, “Financial aid has helped a lot...but they have those specific requirements [to complete] ...not allowing student just to come in [to enroll]. Participant 10 shared that she has been assisted by financial aid services, and they have provided her with updates about a refund. She said, “Yes. In fact, they sent money to students' accounts as well.” Participant 12 related a similar experience with financial aid staff follow-up services, saying, “Oh yes, they have also made sure everything is up to date and everything is current.” For these students, uninterrupted financial aid made their academic experience less stressful.

The career planning services offered by the Career Center played a significant role in providing guidance and feedback to facilitate at least one student's pursuit of their goals (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013; Remedios & Richardson, 2013; Skubas, 2017). Participant 8 unfolded her story by sharing, “My favorite service that [SCCC] provided was...the career service department, because as soon as I applied for jobs within my field of study... [the] career service [staff] emailed me, called me; they follow up.” She shared how the career planning staff assisted her with her resume. She recalled how they said, “Let's work on your resume. Let's update this and update that. We have really good

results on this." She further shared that after her interview for a job, the staff followed up again. They wanted to know about her interview experience. She said they asked, "Hey, how was the interview? Did it go well? What did you wear? To make sure you presented well or whatever?" For P8, the Career Center staff were key in providing guidance and feedback to facilitate her career goals.

The role that faculty played was also important in providing academic, degree, and career goal guidance. The importance of faculty in fulfilling this role has been noted in the literature as well (Bettinger & Baker, 2014; Habley et al., 2012; Kuh et al., n.d.; Ullah & Wilson, 2007). Two participants (P2 and P5) shared their experience with the faculty's continued guidance and supervision to achieve career plans. Participant 2 said, "I would have to agree that 75% of professors, the faculty, and staff do care for students, care for their futures, care for what's going on in their lives." She continued to explain that it is up to the students to grab the opportunity, saying, "What [students] could do is to make school a priority, to make them not drop out...I think the teachers and the professors really must care. And they are good with feedback." Participant 5 also affirmed this experience from faculty not only doing follow-up but also giving vital information, saying, "The professor always gives you all the extra information to let you know there are opportunities that might interest you. You might want to go to check it out." While the theme of a strong positive relationship between academic and career goals was again reinforced by these two participants, as noted by P5's experience, there seems to be a gradual shift from a focus on academic goals to a focus more on career goals and aspirations.

Evidence of Quality

Evidence of completeness, trustworthiness, and rigor are important for establishing the quality of qualitative research (Amankwaa, 2016). As evidence of internal reliability, I spent sufficient time during the interviews, clarifying follow-up questions with interviewees, and took extra care to protect the collected data. I took time to establish interview rapport and consistently followed my interview plan, further enhancing the internal reliability of my study. In addition, I verified my initial thematic analysis with the participants through member checking, a procedure that contributes to the transparency and trustworthiness (external validity) of the findings (Golafshani, 2003). I attempted to monitor my own biased influences by paying close attention to the participants' circumstances, feelings, and moods during the interviews. In accordance with the recommendations of Connelly (2016), I used journal notes to help me track any changes and stability factors that might have affected the data collection process. As the researcher, I was aware that I must evaluate the different changes in my feelings and moods that may affect my interpretation of the data. Hence, simply being aware as the researcher that the dynamic interrelationships between myself and the participants served to influence the study's trustworthiness in a positive way. Qualitative researchers using interviews advised that we need to bring out contradictory themes found in the collection of data and reconcile them necessary after the interviews (Connelly, 2016; Golafshani, 2003). I engaged in peer debriefing with my committee chair, which further enhanced the trustworthiness of my findings (Janesick, 2015).

Project Deliverable Based on Findings

The qualitative research methodology and thematic analysis in Section 2 responded to the purpose of the study, which was to conduct qualitative summative evaluation research to determine if SCCC's ASP had achieved its qualitative objectives. In Section 3, I use the information provided from my data analysis to guide a second review of literature on the creation of a policy recommendation, a position paper, based on the findings reported in this section. Section 3 introduces the project that is presented wholly in Appendix A. Section 3 begins with the rationale for selecting the position paper as the project, an explanation of how the position paper genre is appropriate for addressing the research problem, an interconnected analysis of how research supports the content of the project, and review of literature related to policy recommendations and position papers connected to my research findings. Section 3 also includes a description of the project and project evaluation plan and ends with project implications.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Higher educational institutions exist because students have academic and career goals that can only be met by obtaining certain higher education credentials (Favor & Kulp, 2015; Grabowski et al., 2016). The college studied in this research effort had designed an ASP program to help students achieve their academic and career goals. The college's ASP contained both quantitative and qualitative KPIs but had only evaluated the quantitative KPIs. The purpose of this study was to conduct qualitative summative evaluation research to determine if SCCC's ASP had achieved its qualitative objectives. I explored the qualitative dimensions of the ASP program by interviewing students about their experiences related to the three qualitative KPIs of (a) 21st-century skills to enhance preparedness, (b) customer service for a better campus experience, and (c) guidance and feedback provided by faculty and staff at the college. As described herein, an evaluation report was created as the project deliverable and is provided in Appendix A.

In this section, I present my rationale for choosing an evaluation report as the project genre, my review of literature related to evaluation reports, a project description, project evaluation, and project implications. description of this proposed project, the evaluation report of SCCC-ASP qualitative key performance objectives based on the findings from interviews of 12 student-qualified participants, including a review of literature related to the development of evaluation reports, the report's development, an evaluation plan for the project proper, and project implications.

Rationale

The program evaluation report was one of four project genres recommended by Walden University for project study capstones (Harris, n.d.; Nastachowski, n.d.). I chose this genre over the three others because it related to my research study to evaluate the three key performance objectives of the college's ASP program. The other three genres included curriculum plans, professional development curricula, and policy recommendations. Of the three alternatives, a policy recommendation was considered but abandoned due to the positive themes resulting from my interviews with students. Most of the participants provided positive feedback to the three areas of the ASP program, which generally moved students toward fulfilling their academic and career goals. If the findings had produced results that indicated the failure of the ASP to fulfill its qualitative objectives, then a policy recommendation to change campus procedures may have been appropriate. A curriculum plan was not considered because the study did not investigate curricula, and I did not evaluate various courses that integrate 21st-century skills, customer services, and communicating feedback to students across different SCCC campuses. Lastly, professional development training was not considered because there were no findings related to inadequacies of staff, faculty, or administrators. Because the findings generally affirmed the achievement of the qualitative objectives of the ASP, a qualitative evaluation report was deemed the most appropriate project for this study.

The rationale for the study was that the qualitative KPIs of the college's ASP had not been evaluated as had the quantitative KPIs. My data analysis revealed three main findings from the participants' narratives including (a) the SCCC ASP program had

prepared the participants by instilling 21st Century skills and skillsets for academic, career, and life effectiveness, (b) faculty and staff's personal skills and interest in students were key in providing exemplary customer service, and (c) continuous guidance, feedback, and follow-up in various forms were key in helping participants achieve their academic and career goals. As a result of these findings, the logical project genre selected was a qualitative evaluation report that can be submitted to the college to complement the college's previous quantitative findings.

Review of the Literature

According to Purdue University (n.d.), *literature reviews* provide the opportunity to do “research (scholarship) in each field” (para 1). This section provides a literature review on topics related to writing evaluation reports. I use Walden University Library to provide databases and other educational resources to find literature related to writing program evaluation reports. These additional resources included ProQuest Dissertations, peer-reviewed journals, and textbooks on conducting and reporting program evaluations. Because this section focuses on program evaluation reporting, I utilized keyword search terms like *evaluation study*, *evaluation report*, *assessment report*, *accountability*, *communication*, *stakeholder relation*, *stakeholder engagement*, *program outcomes*, *program development*, *reporting program evaluation*, *program evaluation reporting to stakeholders*, *program evaluation analysis*, *program evaluation data presentation*, and *program assessment* to find scholarly journals and articles published since 2018. The focus of these searches was to learn best practices for writing program evaluation reports,

their objectives, importance, and components for presenting the findings, recommendations, and conclusions for this research-based program evaluation study.

After an initial unsuccessful search for peer-reviewed articles on program evaluation reporting, I sought the help of a Walden University research librarian to find qualifying articles. We made use of databases available at Walden Library and Google Scholar to locate relevant literature during these additional research efforts. While these efforts resulted in a few peer-reviewed articles on program evaluation and reporting, none met the 5-year criterion for including recent peer-reviewed articles. Based on these efforts, the librarian suggested that I include relevant articles even though they were older than five years and include in my literature review recent textbooks on writing evaluation reports. Thus, although much of the literature included herein does not meet the 5-year criterion for recent peer-reviewed articles, it does nonetheless represent the most recent extant literature on crafting evaluation reports.

Theory and Research to Support the Project Evaluation Report

The term *evaluation report* refers to a document report derived from a systematic study of the performance of a program, the impact of a project, and the effectiveness of a policy or any intervention (EvalCommunity, 2023; Owen, 2020; Podems, 2019).

Evaluation reports can be produced from the program evaluation itself which, in this case, was an assessment of the quality of a program related to two aspects: (a) the qualitative KPI processes and (b) the qualitative KPI outcomes (Fisher, 2010; McNeil, 2011). Evaluation can also be the finding of relevant opinions from others (Fisher, 2010). A program evaluation report in the context of education can be both objective and

subjective, and it may include the opinions of people involved in the program evaluation (EvalCommunity, 2023; Fisher, 2010; Patton, 2018, 2021). As was the case in this study, the opinions of students who were enrolled during the ASP under investigation were consulted for their relevant reflections based on their experiences.

A program evaluation report may include a summary of the report, program evaluation plan, purpose, scope, methodology, key findings, recommendations, summary of data sources, analysis of the evaluation findings, conclusions, and specific recommendations for program or project improvement (EvalCommunity, 2023). According to EvalCommunity (2023), an evaluation report can support the “monitoring and evaluation within organizations...by promoting a culture of learning and continuous improvement” (para. 4). While there were no monitors or evaluations identified during the ASP, qualitative KPIs were identified within the ASP, thus facilitating the evaluation research and report upon the ASP’s completion (EvalCommunity, 2023; National Council for Voluntary Organizations, 2023; Owen, 2020). Based on EvalCommunity’s (2023) definition of an evaluation report, the kind of summative evaluation completed in my study could also be implemented as formative evaluation monitoring during future ASP implementations to promote a culture of learning and continuous improvement among college faculty and staff.

An evaluation report is a document that presents “the finding of a program evaluation which serves as a tool for policy guidance and decision-making” (EvalCommunity, 2023, para. 6). It can provide stakeholders like school administrators and leaders with a comprehensive assessment of the program, policy, and project in terms

of performance and effectiveness, strengths, and weaknesses; and provides recommendations for future improvement (Owen, 2020; Podems, 2019). According to EvalCommunity (2023), there are several reasons for reporting the results of evaluation research to stakeholders. Summarized below, the first reason for providing evaluation is accountability. Evaluation reports help demonstrate whether the program objectives are met. Second, evaluation reports provide important discoveries including best practices, challenges, and interventions for future program implementation. Third, evaluation reports often recommend future program improvements using research-based findings and conclusions. Finally, evaluation reports are used to communicate to stakeholders insights from research findings and conclusions for improving future initiatives. These reasons for providing evaluation reports may also serve as an outline for creating evaluation reports. For this study, the research-derived evaluation report may be consumed by the college's leadership and community to provide new insight, recommendations, and results based on the qualitative KPIs of the 2016 – 2020 ASP.

The term *evaluation* implies an approach or method to collect, to analyze, and use data in determining the outcomes and impacts of intervention and action plans (Owen, 2020; Posavac, 2015; Rubin, 2020; Shackman, 2020). A *program* can be understood broadly as policies, interventions, systems, initiatives, and other efforts encompassing preparedness efforts including research and projects (CDC.org, 2022b; Posavac, 2015). According to Posavac (2015), “program evaluation contributes to quality services by providing feedback from program activities” (p. 14). An evaluation will determine the effectiveness of a specific program and understand why a program may or may not have

worked (Posavac, 2015). One main goal of program evaluation is to improve future implementation and program development (Posavac, 2015; Rubin, 2020). Program evaluations have two main purposes, including (a) research, which is finding generalizable knowledge useful for program development and effectiveness and (b) monitoring, which is tracking the program or project implementation using data to indicate progress or lack thereof (Posavac, 2015; Rubin, 2020). The three basic questions that program evaluations should answer are (a) the extent to which the program achieved its goals, (b) how the program might be improved, and (c) whether the program should continue (Shackman, 2020). Program evaluation begins with a certain theory that explains how and why a program is supposed to work, a logical and reasonable description of why various activities should be done, and identifying program results, benefits, or impacts after the program's completion (Shackman, 2020). More recently, the four program evaluation questions proposed by Shackman (2020) mirror those previously published by others. They include questions that seek to (a) understand the outcomes of the program, (b) discover the satisfaction levels of people who were involved with the program, (c) recommend ways the program could be improved, and (d) how the program worked compared to how it was intended to work. My project study filled a gap in practice, which was to understand the extent to which the college's ASP worked in relation to its qualitative objectives.

Evaluation Models

Program evaluation can be approached in different ways to guide the planning and implementation of programs (Shackman, 2020). One approach to evaluating programs is

the industrial inspection model. This approach is based on a manufacturing paradigm of quality control wherein random products in a production line are examined to identify substandard quality and opportunities for production quality improvement (Posavac, 2015). A second approach, the black box evaluation model, reflects a computer processing paradigm where inputs and outputs are examined without regard for the internal operation. The black-box model is sometimes referred to as a consumer model because it is similar to how consumers evaluate products before they purchase them off the shelf (Posavac, 2015). A third approach employs the impressionistic model. This model is probably the most widely used form of program evaluation and manifests when administrators, supervisors, or other stakeholders communicate their impressions of a program's performance informally (Posavac, 2015). Finally, Posavac (2015) also discussed a research model of program evaluation wherein trained researchers apply rigorous research standards to evaluate program effectiveness. In my study, I applied social science research standards using a basic qualitative design to evaluate a college's ASP while being mindful to avoid bias and judgments that often accompany evaluations, especially evaluations that are based on the impressionistic model (Posavac, 2015).

Importance of Evaluative Thinking

Evaluative thinking may be considered a discipline unto itself. To make use of evaluative thinking methods, focused evaluation is conducted to gather a collection of experiences, impacts, and outcomes for future decisions about program development and effectiveness (Owen, 2020; Patton, 2018; Podems, 2019). Evaluators have to set criteria as the basis for evaluative judgment (Patton, 2020; Podems, 2019). It can be a client-

focused evaluation (Patton, 2021) or an action-oriented evaluation (Patton, 2020), and either approach may include a formative evaluation at the same time (Boothroyd, 2018; Patton, 2018, 2020). Program evaluation provides evaluators and researchers the following advantages: (a) it demonstrates whether the program is effective or not, (b) it justifies program expenditures, (c) provides support for continuous funding, (d) it helps institutions manage limited resources, and (e) it improves program implementation and effectiveness (Posavac, 2015; Rubin, 2020). Program evaluations were conducted with the following purposes in mind: (a) to allow documentation of program accomplishments; (b) to ensure program replicability; (c) to improve decision-making; and (d) to improve marketing and promotional purposes (Boothroyd, 2018; Owen, 2020; Podems, 2019). In short, program evaluations are used to determine whether a program has worked or did not work (Patton, 2020). In terms of connecting evaluation theory and practice through my study, I used the qualitative KPIs of the college's ASP as the program criteria and research questions for establishing my study. The interview questions were derived from the research questions and, as such, related directly to the qualitative KPIs and ASP objectives. The findings based on my resulting data analyses are summarized in my program evaluation report in Appendix A. The resulting report could influence future decisions about future ASPs to positively affect campus culture and facilitate student academic and career goal progress (Boothroyd, 2018; Owen, 2020; Patton, 2021).

Evaluations Shaping Program Outcomes

Evaluating educational programs like ASP provided the importance of knowing the educational program parameters of success (Fisher, 2010). According to Fisher (2010),

The parameters are: (1) the relevance index, referring to an evaluation of predefined objectives; (2) the efficiency index, referring to the fiscal efficiency of the program; (3) the effectiveness index evaluating the attainment of the program's objectives; (4) the impact index gauging the effect on the consumers, for whom the program is undertaken; and (5) the final parameter is the program's sustainability index (p. 1).

Every environment or educational culture can be unique, which needs to be analyzed during the process of evaluation (Boothroyd, 2018; Fisher, 2010). Evaluations can involve process evaluation and summative evaluation which include a gathering of information during and after the implementation (Boothroyd, 2018; Fisher, 2010).

Process evaluation is aimed at examining the program structures, program activities, and its implementation process to determine if the program expectations have been achieved (Boothroyd, 2018). Hence, this kind of program evaluation can collect data in the middle of its implementation to determine if the outcomes are achieved, to improve program effectiveness, and future program development (Patton, 2021). It could provide institutions with a progress report while the program is on its period of implementation (Boothroyd, 2018; Fisher, 2010).

Program Evaluations for Social Change

Educational programs have goals and objectives (Fisher, 2010; Patton, 2018). “Goals are the substance of what a person or an organization desires to achieve” (Fisher, 2010, p. 5). Goals are simply the aspirations, the purposes, and vision of the program we want to achieve (Fisher, 2010; Patton, 2021). One goal of program evaluation is simply to achieve change (French, 2017; Martinez, 2018; Wolff & Booth, 2017). Objectives on the other hand, are simply “the battle plan, the stepping stones” (Fisher, 2010, p. 5) used to achieve the goals (Boothroyd, 2018; Given, 2020; Lenz, 2022; Patton, 2021). Thus, objectives are concrete steps set from goals and can be formulated with two or more achievable action plans to arrive at the goals (Herrity, 2023; Verschuren & Zsolnai, 1998). An example of a convenient approach to reaching goals is by setting objectives using the SMART model: “Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-based” (Herrity, 2023, para 1). To evaluate education programs, program evaluators would start with program goals and objectives set by the program (Fisher, 2010; Skubas, 2017). Often, the goal is the end of the program, like student success or career achievement. The program will set SMART objectives like KPIs and objectives which will guide staff and leaders on what to do to achieve the goals (Herrity, 2023).

In the study of KPIs and objectives, I interviewed 12 student participants to assess the effectiveness of a program in producing change. The theory of change is seen by evaluators as one relevant outcome of program evaluation (French, 2017; Kaszynska, 2021; Reinholz & Andrews, 2020), including policy change (Ghazinoory & Aghaei, 2021; Haupt, 2021), the diffusion of innovation (Al-Rahmi et al., 2021; Glen et al., 2017;

Guo et al., 2020; Robertson et al., 2023), administrative behavior and leadership change (Abdulkareem et al., 2020; Abebe et al., 2020; French, 2017; Hagger et al., 2020; Hwang & Choi, 2019). These theory of change are likely conditioned by program interventions, program development, and program evaluations (Abebe et al., 2020; Boothroyd, 2018; Fisher, 2010; Hagger et al., 2020; Owen, 2020; Reinholz & Andrews, 2020).

Outcome evaluations asked what happened to students during the program implementation period and how much such a program made a difference to them (Boothroyd, 2018; Given, 2020; L. Markle et al., 2017; N. B. Miller & Bell, 2016). In other words, to determine the impact of a program, outcome evaluations are necessary to assess whether and how well the objectives of a program were met and have an impact to program recipients (Boothroyd, 2018; Evans, 2020; Gibbs Thomas, 2015; L. Markle et al., 2017). The overall outcome of program evaluation would be social change when evaluators gather stories of people impacted by the program implementation and recorded and report these stories of changes in understanding, attitudes, behaviors, and practices that come from program implementation and activities (Abebe et al., 2020; Boothroyd, 2018; French, 2017; Patton, 2018, 2020).

Challenges Facing Program Evaluation Project

To conduct program research evaluation studies is not an end in itself but a means for better policy, better programs, better projects, and so better lives (Owen, 2020; Patton, 2021; Posavac, 2015). The first challenge for evaluators is identifying the evaluation processes to ensure that evidence is used in policy change, program development, and project implementations (Patton, 2020). The challenge is that studies like the qualitative

aspect of ASP must have policy relevance and can be used by policymakers in improving future ASP programs. Effective program evaluation requires time, money, and technical skills (Posavac, 2015; Shackman, 2020). The second challenge is that program evaluation can exhaust limited resources or can divert the attention of staff from program goals which focus on activities and implementations, not on end results (Owen, 2020; Shackman, 2020). The program staff who are concerned with program activities and implementations can interrupt and compromise the program's formative process (Fisher, 2010; Owen, 2020; Shackman, 2020). Third, data collection and data sharing can be perceived as issues with the “Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996” (HIPAA; CMS.gov, 2021). United States Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) explained that “the privacy rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) establishes national standards to protect individuals’ medical records and other personal health information” (CMS.gov, 2021, para 1). HIPAA training and compliance are required for program staff to make sure that patient’s health information and the privacy of medical records are preserved. The HIPAA law also requires that the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) develop regulations to make sure that everyone protects the privacy and secure health information of individuals (CDC.org, 2022a; CMS.gov, 2021). I personally must take this HIPAA training as part of Walden University's graduate degree program, which is doing research involving students to make sure that the student's rights and information are protected.

Standards for Effective Program Evaluation Project

Program evaluation is committed to change, to improve, and to communicate its results (Patton, n.d., 2018, 2020). It has a standard to guide professional practice (Owen, 2020; Posavac, 2015; Shackman, 2020). According to Patton (2018, 2021), since a program evaluation is important in measuring the outcome and impact of any program, intervention, and program development, certain standards need to be followed to ensure that evaluators take responsibility for their actions and decisions. Patton (2021), on utilization-focused evaluation, suggested five standards for evaluation which can serve as a guide to achieve program evaluation results: utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and accountability (Patton, 2021). First, the utility standard for effective evaluation is to ensure that the program evaluation will provide data or information to serve the needs of the intended beneficiaries or users (Patton, 2021). Second, the feasibility standard is to ensure that the program evaluation will provide realistic, prudent, and frugal results achievable within the time period in a given situation (Patton, 2021). Third, the propriety standard ensures that the program evaluation will follow ethical and legal requirements, respecting the identity, dignity, and personal information of the intended clients and users (Patton, 2021). Fourth, the accuracy standard is intended to ensure that the program evaluation conveys meaningful and truthful information about the merit of the program being evaluated (Patton, 2021). Lastly, accountability standards are aimed at ensuring that the program evaluation will be conducted professionally according to the standard of quality and credibility (Patton, 2021). These standards need to be preserved (a) to practice sensitivity in dealing with personal information issues in doing program

evaluation, (b) to conduct program evaluation with flexibility to the people involved in program evaluation, and (c) to ensure that evaluators can focus with program improvements and program development for future improved interventions, outcomes, and results (Patton, 1994, 2018, 2020, 2021). Hence, the standards for effective program evaluation provide program evaluators with a set of quality norms in designing, conducting, and reporting program evaluation that are ethical, feasible, accurate, and relevant to the program stakeholders (Owen, 2020; Patton, 2018; Shackman, 2020).

These standards are intended for program evaluators to ensure that their evaluation results are trustworthy and meaningful for decision-making and program improvement. Some of the benefits of following the standards for effective program evaluation are: (a) helping evaluators plan and implement appropriate program context and purpose (Patton, 2021); (b) helping evaluators to collaborate with program staff, funders, and participants through evaluation process (Patton, 2018, 2020); (c) helping evaluators produce evaluation reports that are clear, credible, and actionable; and (d) helping evaluators demonstrate accountability and transparency for their evaluation methods and findings (Owen, 2020; Patton, 2021; Posavac, 2015; Shackman, 2020).

Some Common Challenges in Writing an Evaluation Report

In writing program evaluation reports, evaluators can face challenges like data limitations, stakeholder disagreements, technical writing skills, time constraints, and communication barriers (EvalCommunity, 2023). Inaccurate and incomplete data can lead to misinterpretations and unreliability (EvalCommunity, 2023). Stakeholders may disagree to the findings pose by evaluators (EvalCommunity, 2023; Owen, 2020;

Posavac, 2015). Some evaluators may face difficulty in presenting the evaluation reports due to some technical writing skills limitations like the inability to present statistical data (EvalCommunity, 2023; Owen, 2020; Posavac, 2015). Time constraints and communication barriers may contribute to the challenges in writing evaluation reports especially in dealing with a large volume of data and reporting deadlines (EvalCommunity, 2023; Owen, 2020; Posavac, 2015). Thus, with an awareness of these challenges, program evaluators can address them and be able to come up with reports that provide a clear and accurate understanding of the phenomena for improved implementation (EvalCommunity, 2023).

Project Description

After doing the research project study of evaluating the qualitative aspects of the ASP program, a Program Evaluation Report will be presented to the college leaders and administrators of SCCC (Appendix A). This report includes a summative evaluation of the performance, impact, and effectiveness of the college ASP program as the end result of the project study. Included in the report are an introduction, a project overview, methodology, key findings, implications, impact assessment, lessons learned, future consideration, conclusion, references, and stakeholders. The report hopes to provide different stakeholders with a comprehensive report of the ASP program's performance, impact, and implementation outcomes during its years of implementation as a tool for decision-making now and for the future. Thus, this evaluation report is for the college community to benefit from the college leaders and administrators to use the key findings,

future recommendations, and implications on how to improve college ASP programs in the years to come and in the future college strategic plans.

Needed Resources for Program Evaluation Report Presentations

The program evaluation report needs to be presented to college stakeholders. Resources needed to present the program evaluation report will be my time and the time of any stakeholders who would like to know the results of my study. In the evaluation report proper, I have identified three levels of stakeholders who may be interested in knowing the project study's results. As discussed below, however, the only stakeholders I have formally promised to share the report with are the vice chancellor for instruction and student services and the dean of the College for Liberal Arts.

Some Potential Barriers and Solutions

A potential barrier identified in the program evaluation report is that of time. My solution to this potential barrier is to initially limit my formal presentation and discussion of my results to the dean of my college, who also agreed to serve as the college's liaison for my study. Based on the dean's recommendation, I can arrange a presentation and discussion with the vice chancellor at their convenience. Other presentations may be arranged based on these stakeholders' recommendations.

Implementation Timetable

During the proposal writing stage of my research, I agreed to deliver my completed program evaluation report to two college leaders once the final research project was approved by Walden University. The principal college stakeholders and those I have communicated with while creating the research proposal included the vice

chancellor for instruction and student services and the dean of Liberal Arts. The dean also agreed to serve as the college's liaison for the project study. The timetable for this meeting will be immediately preceding the fall semester of 2024. Based on the results of my meeting with the dean, then the report would be available to share during the College's Departmental Assembly to kick off the new academic year. If desired by the dean, I will create a PowerPoint presentation to share with the college during the kick-off. I will share the evaluation report with the vice-chancellor based on the dean's recommendation.

Project Evaluation Plan

According to Walden University's (2023) Project Study Checklist, the Project Evaluation Plan is omitted for project studies that are themselves evaluation studies. I would still like to include a few related thoughts about the importance of the program evaluation report.

According to EvalCommunity.com (2023), doing a project evaluation study requires an evaluation plan, objective data collection, systematic data analysis and interpretation, and reporting. Posavac (2015) explained that evaluation planning guides evaluators to every step needed to find out valuable information about program implementation, activities, and outcomes. Critical planning helps you decide what data or information you need and saves time from wasting the information you and your stakeholders do not need (Posavac, 2015). Planning leads to a systematic strategy in doing program evaluation with identified areas in the program to be assessed for improvement and future considerations (EvalCommunity, 2023). The final stage of the

planning is the program evaluation reporting. The evaluators can provide information to stakeholders for better decision-making, for improved program design and implementation, and for future funding support. The report will assist college leaders and managers to use critically the data from participants' narratives about ASP's contributions to them during their college years. It is thus important to make evaluation planning and reports as part of institutional responsibility, school leaders' accountability, and stakeholders' transparency (Posavac, 2015).

Project Implications

I identified three levels of stakeholders in the program evaluation report who may be interested in knowing the results of this study. The first level stakeholders, primary stakeholders, are those executive-level administrators of the college who would be most interested in the results of a program evaluation of the qualitative aspects of the previously implemented ASP. Examples of primary-level stakeholders include the president, vice presidents, deans, and department chairs. With the college liaison's approval, executives serving on the college's Board of Trustees may also be considered primary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders also include anyone who is currently serving on a committee to design and implement future ASPs because the insights shared in the Evaluation Report could be embedded in the evaluation plan to include an evaluation of the qualitative aspects of the ASP in a formative way. Secondary stakeholders would include faculty and staff members who encounter students every day and who, therefore, are responsible for implementing any qualitative requirements specified in the ASP. Finally, tertiary stakeholders include the students themselves. While students may

not be interested in consuming the Evaluation Report proper, I include them as tertiary stakeholders because they may benefit most from concerted efforts to implement qualitative aspects of future APS with fidelity. I will focus initially on sharing the results of this study with the dean of the College of liberal arts and then proceed to share with others based on the dean's recommendations.

Positive social change has been promoted in a combination of three ways. First, by identifying formative themes related to organizational change reflected through pursuing the qualitative ASP objectives and KPIs, the college leaders will have new information for enhancing future ASP initiatives. Second, by identifying evidence that the qualitative ASP goals were met, an important accountability piece has been provided that justifies implementing future qualitative ASP objectives and KPIs. Finally, colleges that have similar contexts will have an additional tool for evaluating the qualitative targets of their ASP initiatives. In short, positive social change is achieved when colleges achieve their quantitative and qualitative goals and objectives. Student engagement and success are facilitated through effective ASPs that move college cultures in positive, intended directions.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this final section is to have an opportunity to reflect on this research experience as I near the end of the research process and proceed, with approvals, to graduate with the degree of Doctor of Education. First, I present the strengths and limitations of the study, followed by a discussion of my recommendations for alternative approaches for conducting similar project evaluation studies. Included also are short discussions around scholarship, project development, and my experience related to leadership and change. I also reflect on the importance of the work as well as discuss implications, applications, and directions for future research. Section 4 closes with my conclusion.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

The strengths of this research-based program evaluation study include the inherent value of the student narratives shared in this study. College leaders may not otherwise have an opportunity to know the experiences shared by students about the qualitative aspects of the ASP. Another important strength related to the student narratives is the themes that were unpacked through my thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. The process I followed in conducting this study, together with the unpacked themes, can be used to help guide future ASP planners such that evaluating the qualitative aspects of projects can occur as naturally as evaluating the quantitative aspects. Another strength of the study is the evaluation report contained in Appendix A. That, too, could serve as a template for helping others report evaluation results of the

qualitative aspects of future ASPs. An important strength of the ASP was that it contained qualitative goals and objectives. The overriding strength of this study was the demonstration of how those qualitative objectives can be evaluated to determine their merits for achieving the related outcomes.

Project Limitations

The main limitation of the study was that I had only one source of data, student interviews, for my data collection. My original interview protocol called for interviewing faculty and staff as well, but I was unsuccessful in recruiting those populations to participate in the study. This difficulty may have arisen from the time (3 years) that had expired since the ASP had concluded to the time that I began my participant recruitment. Other sources of qualitative data, including historical records, may have improved the possibility to triangulate findings that were reported based solely on thematic analysis of the student-only transcripts, thereby increasing the trustworthiness of my findings (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative definition of the problem could include evaluating the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the ASP congruently, as well as doing so while the ASP is still in progress. In other words, an alternative to evaluating the qualitative aspects of an ASP forensically would be to do so near the end of the ASP, but while the ASP is still living. Conducting the evaluation study at this point in the ASP's life cycle would facilitate solutions to the limitations noted in the last paragraph, as well as enable a mixed-methods design that could explore both quantitative and qualitative ASP objectives during similar

time frames. In addition to facilitating the interviews with students, faculty, and staff who are still living the ASP, historical records related to the project would become more readily available. Conducting the project evaluation at the right time would increase the project's reliability and trustworthiness, thereby improving the possibility of transferability to other colleges with similar contexts (Golafshani, 2003; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership/Change Scholarship

The ASP evaluation study I conducted was a challenging learning experience. It began before my enrollment in the doctoral program at Walden University. Rather, it really started when I took the Adjunct Certification Program in 2015 through a community college where I was also teaching. The discussion on retention and student success instilled a desire to explore this area myself and forced me to deepen my own commitment to helping students achieve their goals. I believe in the saying: you cannot give what you do not have. So, I took the student success issue up with my students and grew personally from those conversations. My interest and commitment to student success continued in 2016 when I enrolled in the doctoral program in Education Leadership at Walden University. As I learned about the critical areas of research design through attending residency, my research interest in this area began to solidify. As I read books and the research literature on student success during my content courses, my knowledge on the topic and ways to pursue research about student success continued to

germinate until a fledgling research design emerged in the two key research courses: Tools for Doctoral Research and Demystifying Doctoral Research.

Even after my research proposal was approved, I continued to hit roadblocks and learn from the process. One such learning experience was when the University Research Reviewer, during a research proposal review, suggested that I interview not just students but also faculty, staff, and administrators. After receiving committee and IRB approvals to move forward with the revised research proposal, I quickly learned that recruiting participants other than students would not be possible. Another roadblock led to another detour and another learning experience. I learned that resilience and grit are important personal qualities for completing research projects.

In addition to the principles of conducting research, I also learned a lot about academic writing. I learned to use the MEAL plan to craft scholarly paragraphs with well-connected sentences. I learned to paraphrase to avoid unintentional plagiarism and to increase synthesis. I also learned the importance of using a citation manager, in my case Zotero, to help with organizing my research articles, as well as improve my formatting of APA-style citations and references.

Practitioner Learning

The reality is that life for many students, especially those who attend two-year college, is more about earning money and making a living than making grades in college. Many college students, especially those who attend two-year colleges after high school, have already started working, they are earning an income, and in some cases, they are raising a family. College life can easily become secondary to these students. I used my

doctoral research experience as one way of formalizing my professional career centering on helping students achieve their career goals. My passion remains strong for helping these students and what I learned during this research process will give me tools for continuing this important work.

Project Development

Doing evaluation research has been a challenge for me because I had to get in touch with real students who would be volunteers for the interview, could make time to participate, and they had met the criteria for participation. The research process was my first focus in the project study and helped me develop some skills as a scholar-practitioner and as a project evaluator. Higher education in the United States today has enrolled students who finished high school; some are also working part-time, and often already have a family to support (Barhoum, 2018; Emblom-Callahan et al., 2019; Skubas, 2017). Hence, most of these students need support either from family or institutions to achieve their career goals (Bannigan et al., 2022). Consuming the recent literature on student success and evaluation studies created a new awareness about the role of institutional support for these students. That the issue of student success can be addressed at the institutional level and that this project evaluation study may contribute to developing such supports are realizations that will make me a stronger advocate for students as a college leader.

Leadership and Change

Oppong (2020) provided a quotation attributed to Albert Einstein that impressed me during this study process. According to Oppong, Einstein said, “The measure of

intelligence is the ability to change” (Oppong, 2020, para. 1). Stephen Hawking paraphrased the sentiment by stating, “Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change” (Strauss, 2021, para. 1). As suggested in these two quotations, change, and how we deal with it, has been a challenging phenomenon associated with the human condition for quite some time. I always look at it as an opportunity for growth and improvement. Change is inevitable, so why not embrace change as a positive growth potential that I have within me rather than something that just happens to me? This doctoral journey has provided me with continual practice in learning new things, thinking about them deeply, internalizing the parts that are important to me, and then using that to positively influence my own growth and in so doing, hopefully influence positive change and growth for others. I hope that the ASP program that I studied, combined with the results of my study, provides fertile ground for shaping positive change in the college by improving future ASPs. Learning from the students’ feedback during the interviews, with the affirmation of how the college helped them improve their skills, and how the college took care of them using exemplary customer service, and continuous feedback for academic and career achievement, I have come to understand how I can be a leader of change for the college for now and in the future.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Conducting an evaluation research study with student participants informed how students at the college have been helped by institutional remediations and interventions of the college ASP. Although student success is often seen as a personal concern, it is also largely an institutional responsibility. The narratives shared by the student participants

mostly confirmed what the college ASP was trying to accomplish with its qualitative goals and objectives. Delivering college programs and services to students using a focus on customer care and student services can enhance student campus experiences and, in so doing, increase retention and loyalty among students. Similar to student care is the college's continuous guidance and feedback that students experience to support their academic and career goal achievements. An important part of this study is the evaluation report that stakeholders can read to understand ASPs and their qualitative outcomes better.

The college has continued to develop ASPs (or strategic plans every 5 years) for students. I hope that the results of this study can be used to influence future ASP development in positive ways. Using the evaluation approach demonstrated through this study can serve as a formal qualitative research design to help inform future ASP design and implementation efforts to promote student preparedness, campus experience, and academic and career success.

This study has three important contributions to the college's mission of helping students achieve their career goals. First, the demographic information about the twelve participants, who were mostly women, showed a significant women population in the college. The college mission needs to include the provision that women receive equal rights to education by avoiding gender inequality and discriminatory practices (L. Murphy et al., 2018; Tannenbaum et al., 2016). Some obstacles women encountered were early marriage, domestic gender-based violence, and poverty as reasons for the high percentage of illiteracy among women worldwide (UNESCO, 2024). Second, the study

report provided the college leaders and administrators with the perceptions of student participants about the different college customer services, which comprise student campus services, guidance counseling, and other intervention programs like mentoring and tutorials. Lastly, the student participants' perceptions provided data for the staff and faculty about the importance of personal skills for delivering student services including the use of technology in the communication system. Today's college students are consumers of technology and rely heavily on automated communication to stay informed.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Implications

When students achieve their academic and career goals using effective success services, the college not only fulfills its mission but does so while creating future supporters of the institution (Grabowski et al., 2016; Kimbark et al., 2017). As mentioned in my program evaluation report (Appendix A), some implications can be drawn from these institutional interventions and services. First, the college program has contributed to skill development that will serve the students well in their future academic and career interests. Second, the ASP has helped to provide students with a better college experience through exemplary customer services that impacted loyalty, persistence, and retention. Great campus experiences affect student lives in positive ways. They aid in retention and facilitate the attainment of the student's academic and career goals.

Applications

This evaluation project study provides college leadership and administrators with more than a report about the qualitative performance of a previous ASP. It provides

leadership and others who are interested in ASPs a model process for monitoring and evaluating the qualitative aspects of future ASP initiatives. Just because the qualitative components of ASPs can be more involved in evaluation than quantitative ones, it does not mean that the qualitative aspects should be overlooked. Research-derived techniques, like the ones provided in this study, can be used to assist in the design and evaluation of future college ASPs. Qualitative aspects like gender roles, gender identity, and gender relations need to be considered especially within large college populations (K. R. Murphy, 2020). The college ASP may operate differently within and across sexes (Tannenbaum et al., 2016), and these differences should be included. Second, the delivery of 21st-century skills to students should be consistently applied as the backbone of student preparedness for life success and must remain embedded in the curricula. Research studies showed that when students are provided with skill training within the classroom, we develop their potential, nurture their talents, and broaden their horizons (Urbani et al., 2017). The final observation is that the empathy and care modeled by faculty and staff demonstrate provide greater impacts on students' academic and career achievement because of students' feelings of importance and being cared for. With these observations, the college leaders and administrations can support the ASP implementations by conducting institutional training for the implementing team, staff, and faculty members.

Professional development training can be organized among faculty and staff across the college campuses to improve teaching skills and strategies. First, the need for training new teaching strategies focusing of developing personal skills in handling

student concerns and issues should be a priority. As the faculty and staff learned new strategies, they improved their personal and teaching skills using fun activities with embedded lessons, which can provide wisdom to journey toward the right path and build confidence to face academic and life challenges (Haug & Mork, 2021; Lavi et al., 2021). Second, the alignment of workforce demands, curricula, and classroom activities should be a focus of any training. Instructors need to do investigations on the changing workforce demands, what employers and businesses want for the workers, and what skills and knowledge need to be taught and learned (Borup & Evmenova, 2019; Genelza, 2022; Haug & Mork, 2021). Thus, the college can improve the quality of staff and faculty members by organizing college-wide professional development training to improve personal and teaching skills.

Directions for Future Research

This qualitative evaluation study has one data source: student participants' perceptions. Future research should include the perception of faculty and staff about the qualitative aspects of college ASPs. The goal of knowing the perception of the faculty and staff is to identify the strengths and opportunities for improving the ASP implementation and program while it is being delivered. This formative perspective-taking about ASP evaluation can only improve any summative findings after the ASP has expired. Including a mixed-methods design will provide a more complete understanding of the ASP performance.

Another area to study would be the potential employers of the college's graduates. Predicting, verifying, and adjusting the curricula based on actual business needs would be

a good way to align qualitative ASP goals with the actual needs of the community.

Another group to be involved in the study are the alumni or graduates and inquire from them how the college ASP has helped them in their career and life challenges. They may suggest what do they perceived as graduates about the future ASP and as recommendations for future ASP improvement and implementations.

Conclusion

This evaluation study with its findings provide data for future college success program innovation and implementation. The recommendations of the study provided the college administrators and leaders research-derived findings about ways to improve through professional development training for the faculty and staff. I found that the ASP generally achieved its qualitative goals and provided a model that can be used to evaluate the qualitative aspects of future ASPs. I also suggested the qualitative goals of future ASPs should be designed with this model in mind.

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PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

Assessing the Qualitative Performance
Criteria of an Academic Success Program
(ASP)

Presented By :

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INTRODUCTION



Southwest City Central College ([SCCC] a pseudonym) is a community college in a southwestern state that has implemented a student success initiative called the Academic Success Program (ASP). The SCCC ASP was designed to assist the growing number of both traditional and non-tradition students (NTS) in achieving success throughout several system campuses. It was conceived and implemented to be embedded to support students from enrollment to the fulfillment of their goals, whether those goals were graduation, transfer to university, certification, or simply career development or advancement (SCCC, n.d.).

The ASP contained four objectives, with the first three objectives containing both quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators (KPI). Because the KPIs that focused on qualitative aspects of the ASP had not been evaluated, the focus of this study was on qualitative evaluation that was designed as a doctoral capstone project study for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctor of education degree from Walden University. The purpose of the study was to explore student experiences and perspectives related to (a) SCCC's integration of 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness, (b) SCCC's implementation of exemplary customer service for students, and (c) SCCC's goal to provide continuous guidance and feedback to facilitate completion of completion degrees, certificates, and awards.

This summative evaluation report briefly describes research efforts to understand the implementation, impact, and outcomes of SCCC's ASP in terms of its qualitative KPI.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Because the quantitative KPIs had already been evaluated by the college, the focus of this study was on the three objectives (labeled 1.1, 1.2, & 1.3) that contained qualitative KPIs. Figure 1 presents the objectives and KPIs of the ASP, with the qualitative KPIs underlined for emphasis.

Figure 1 - The Objectives and KPIs of the ASP

1.1. Improve student preparedness, readiness and alignment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Integrate 21st century skillsets as content across curriculum</u> 2. <u>Strengthen outreach and collaborative efforts with local ISDs</u> 3. <u>Focus on preparation and transition-to-college</u>
1.2. Improve the student experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Develop and implement an exemplary customer service model</u> 2. <u>Create an effective student orientation program which introduces career exploration and selection</u> 3. <u>Develop a success model using data to identify student needs</u>
1.3. Increase student completion of degrees, certificates, and other awards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Use data to ensure courses and schedules match student needs</u> 2. <u>Provide continuous guidance and feedback to students to facilitate completion</u> 3. <u>Provide greater resources and access to supplemental learning</u>
1.4. Ensure that instructional programs prepare students for success in current and future working environments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Expand partnerships with business, industry, and other higher education</u> 2. <u>Align COEs with business and industry needs</u> 3. <u>Establish career centers with COEs and campuses</u>

Note: From Strategic Plan Book* by Flipsnack.com, 2016, p. 46. The underlined KPIs remain to be evaluated by the college and create a focus for this study.

A common strategy for collecting qualitative data for thematic analysis is for the researcher to interview participants who are selected based on qualifying conditions. The purposive sample selected for this study included 12 students or former students who attended SCCC during the period that the ASP had been in effect (during the academic years 2016 - 2019). Another select-in criterion was that the student had attended the college for at least two semesters. Students were invited using a flyer that was posted in several prominent locations on the college's system campuses.

METHODOLOGY

A description of how the study was designed!

Social science research is guided by research questions that are aligned with the research purpose and informed by the conceptual framework of the study. The conceptual framework included Tinto's (1997) Theory of Student Engagement. One way to engage students is to ask them open-ended questions about their experiences along with themes that reflect the purpose of the study. As a result, three research questions were developed to engage in conversations with students about the three qualitative KPIs of the ASP. The three research questions filled the gap in practice, which was to evaluate the qualitative aspect of the ASP. The study's three research questions (RQ) are provided as follows:

RQ1: What are SCCC student perspectives and experiences about integrating 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness during the effective dates of the ASP?

RQ2: How do SCCC students perceive and experience the college's customer services in terms of improving the college experience for students?

RQ3: What are SCCC student perceptions and experiences about guidance and feedback provided to or received by students to facilitate the attainment of their career interests and goals?

These qualitative research questions provided the basis for crafting open-ended interview questions (IQ) to collect data on student perspectives and experiences relative to the ASP's qualitative KIPs during the period it was implemented. A representative example of an IQ for each RQ is provided below.

RQ1 - IQ Example: Please share specific skills that you learned, developed or enhanced within one or more of the courses you took at SCCC.

RQ2 - IQ Example: Please any customer experiences that stood out for you.

RQ3 - IQ Example: Please share specific instances when the guidance or feedback from the college seemed most relevant to you based on your career interests or academic goals?

KEY FINDINGS

A summary of the participants impressions of the KPIs under study!

The scope of the research was delimited to the qualitative aspects of the college's ASP. Using the three research questions, I examined twelve (12) student participants' perceptions and experiences on (a) how the college has integrated 21st-century skills and skillsets within the curriculum, (b) customer service, and (c) the quality of guidance and feedback given to the students. Included in the data were demographics representing gender, student type (traditional vs. non-traditional, and area of study).

OVERALL STUDENT IMPRESSIONS

The overall emotional experience shared by the majority of students was happiness with their college experience. Only one student (P1) expressed frustration with their overall experience.

IMPRESSION ON KPI 1.1.1 - 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

RQ1 was explored using two interview questions about how participants developed 21st century skills during their college experience. Table 1 presents the eight (8) subthemes that were identified by the participants by the frequency of how often it was mentioned. represent 21st century skills based on a frequency count of how many times each skill was mentioned.

Table 1: 21st Century Skills that Impact Student Preparedness

Subthemes & Subtheme Categories	Participant Involvement	Number of Mentions
Oral Communication	P3, P4, P5, P9, P10, P11, P12	12
Teamwork, Project management, & collaboration	P3, P4, P7, P9, P11	10
Time Management	P1, P4, P6, P9, P12	5
Computers & Technology	P1, P5, P6, P8, P12	8
Critical Thinking	P3, P4, P10	3
Writing	P4, P5, P10	4
Experiential Learning	P2, P7	3
Leadership	P2, P6	3

IMPRESSION ON KPI 1.2.1 - EXEMPLARY CUSTOMER SERVICE PROGRAMS TO ENHANCE CAMPUS EXPERIENCES

The students perceived and experienced customer services of the college in ways that improved their campus experiences. The second RQ had only one interview question which asked for examples of customer care experiences that stood out for them. The overarching result was that the staff and faculty personal skills facilitate excellence in customer service. This impression was unpacked from the thematic analysis of transcripts organized around the five categories summarized in Table 2. All participants in this study affirmed that at least one of the customer categories had improved their college experience.

Table 2 - KPI 1.2.1 On Customer Services Improving Campus Experiences

Categories	Participant Involvement	Number of Mentions
Staff & Faculty Services	P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P11, P12	12
Financial Aid Services	P1, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9	16
Academic Advising and Related Services	P1, P4, P6, P9	5
Registration & Enrollment	P1, P4, P7, P10	7
Library Services	P6, P10, P12	3

IMPRESSION ON KPI 1.3.2 – GUIDANCE AND FEEDBACK FOR ACADEMIC AND CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS

RQ 3 was guided by three interview questions to explore how the student participants experienced different services in campus related to their academic and career goals (degree completion, certificates, and awards). The overarching result was that the students perceived that the guidance and feedback from academic advising, financial aid, career planning, and the faculty as most important and helpful in moving them toward their academic and career goals.

Eleven out of twelve participants gave positive feedback that the college faculty and services staff provided guidance and feedback related to their career interests and goals. The only exception was P1, who expressed criticism about Academic Advising that required him to enroll in courses that, in his opinion, were not related to his interest in computer science. The courses he complained about included math and history. Another complaint from P1 about Academic Advising was that he had requested tutorial assistance but was not given the tutorial opportunities he wanted. Academic Advising aside, P1 was positive about his experiences with Financial Aid and Career Planning. Table 3 presents the subthemes related to Feedback and Career Achievements discussed by the participants.

Table 3 - KPI 1.3.2 On Guidance and Feedback for Career Achievements

Subtheme	Participant Involvement	Number of Mentions
Academic Advising	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P10, P11	14
Financial Aid	P1, P10, P12	9
Career Planning	P1, P8, P9	6
Admissions	P5, P10	5
Faculty Follow-up	P2, P5	5

IMPLICATIONS

Insights gained that can improve future project planning and execution.

First, the demographic data showed that most of the twelve participants were women. Sex and gender are important in decision-making, communication, stakeholder engagement, and preferences for the uptake of interventions. Gender roles, gender identity, and gender relations influence the way in which an implementation strategy works, for whom, under what circumstances, and why (Murphy et al., 2018). There is emerging evidence that program theories may operate differently within and across sexes, genders, and other intersectional characteristics under various circumstances.

Second, twelve student participants interviewed affirmed that the college's ASP prepared them with various skills necessary for academics, careers, and life. The purposeful development of 21st-century skills can be a cornerstone of students' progress through their academics and beyond. The academic structure emphasized by the qualitative aspects of the ASP produced individuals who were confident about their skills to navigate life's challenges. When students are given skill development activities embedded in the curriculum, we tap into their creative potential, nurture their talents, and broaden their horizons (Urbani et al., 2017).

Third, the interviews with the student participants affirmed that the qualitative aspects of the ASP's customer service focus enhanced their college and life experiences. When staff, faculty, and other service providers demonstrate empathy and care in their interactions with students, it often results in feelings of loyalty to the college, increased student retention, and even assisted students in school referrals for continued studies beyond the college.

Lastly, the college provided continuous guidance and feedback to students to support academics, career plans, and interests. In particular, communication and various approaches that connected the students with their college programs and requirements were noted as crucial for completing an academic degree in day-to-day student life. A meaningful relationship with campus faculty and service staff contributes to a feeling of importance, and this continuous guidance and feedback for students help keep them on track, not only for satisfying academic requirements but also for the achievement of their career plans.



IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Understanding the Impact of the Program to Participants

METRICS FOR ASSESSING IMPACT

Because the ASP program has both quantitative and qualitative objectives, the qualitative aspects of the ASP (see the KPIs contained under Objectives 1.1, 1.2, & 1.3 of Figure 1) need to be evaluated for their effectiveness and outcomes from the perspectives of students. The research data collection focused on the impact to participants experiences and perspectives related to (a) SCCC's integration of 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness (KPI #1.1.1), (b) SCCC's implementation of exemplary customer service for students (KPI #1.2.1), and (c) SCCC's goal to provide continuous guidance and feedback to facilitate completion of completion degrees, certificates, and awards (KPI #1.3.2). The three KPIs on study are in themselves metrics or indicators for impacts that can determine program outcomes, results, and impacts to student preparedness, campus experience, and career achievements.



LESSONS LEARNED

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Staff and instructors are all responsible for implementing the qualitative aspect of academic success programs. While some instructors and staff accomplish this responsibility naturally, others may find it challenging due simply to the stress that comes with everyday job responsibilities. Training programs aligned with the qualitative aspects of college ASPs can help mitigate the impact of stress, improve the quality of the work experience for employees, and increase the attainment of those qualitative KPIs. Acquiring personal soft skills are critical to helping others on their successes as well. The lack of personal and soft skills from faculty and school staff can affect how they handle student issues and to provide guidance to students for their academic and career needs and goals.



CHANGES TO IMPLEMENT BASED ON LESSONS LEARNED

Professional development and training for faculty and staff are essential to acquisition of personal skills necessary for the transmission of those skills to students. Thus, higher education institutions can set up training programs for any skillset development for their staff, faculty, and leaders. The failure of the faculty and staff to improve themselves in ways that are congruent with the colleges ASP can adversely affect student preparedness in the areas defined by the ASP. Typically, as was the case for this study, those areas will include qualitative goals related to academic achievement, career goals, and workplace effectiveness.

FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Recommendations for future projects based on the evaluation.

This research-based assessment of the ASP program can serve as a tool for future decision-making. It can provide stakeholders, like school administrators and leaders of colleges, with a qualitative evaluation of ASP program goals.

A limitation of this study was that it focused only on students, a limitation that was necessitated because I was unable to recruit administrators or staff to participate in the study. It is, therefore, recommended that future ASPs embed objectives and mechanisms that provide for the evaluation of the qualitative aspects of the ASP throughout the ASP's existence. Providing for such formative assessment will also have the added benefit of producing needs assessments to identify and contract the training needs identified in the previous section. Based on the current study's findings, it is recommended that this evaluation report be shared with colleges and universities through appropriate conference programs and through peer-reviewed publications.



CONCLUSION

RECAP OF KEY POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Future strategic plan must continue to integrate 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum.
2. Professional development training for faculty and staff for effective implementation of skillsets, customer service, and other school services necessary for career achievements.
3. Formative and summative qualitative evaluation be built into future ASPs.
4. Skillsets for 21st century across curriculum must bring about to students' sense of preparedness in areas like oral communication, teamwork, collaboration, and project management.
5. The life and personal skills of faculty and staff played important an important role in providing academic, degree, and career goal guidance.



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STAKEHOLDERS

There are three levels of stakeholders related to the program evaluation report.

The first level stakeholders, primary stakeholders, are those executive-level administrators of the college who would be most interested in the results of a program evaluation of the qualitative aspects of the previously implemented ASP. Examples of primary-level stakeholders include the president, vice presidents, deans, and department chairs. With the president's approval, executives serving on the college's Board of Trustees may also be considered primary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders also include anyone who is currently serving on a committee to design and implement future ASPs because the insights shared in the Evaluation Report could be embedded in the evaluation plan to include an evaluation of the qualitative aspects of the ASP in a formative way.

Secondary stakeholders would include faculty and staff members who come into contact with students every day and who, therefore, are responsible for implementing any qualitative requirements specified in the ASP.

Finally, tertiary stakeholders includes the students themselves. While students may not be interested in consuming the Evaluation Report proper, I include them as tertiary stakeholders because they may benefit most from concerted efforts to the implement qualitative aspects of future APS with fidelity.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR FURTHER INQUIRIES

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joselito.coquilla@waldenu.edu

1906 Creegan Park Ct, Houston, Texas
77047

Appendix B: Email Correspondence for Research Support From [REDACTED]

College Partnership 📄

 joselito.coquilla
Fri 1/22/2021 6:36 PM 👍 ↶ ↷ → …

[REDACTED]

Ok Thanks, [REDACTED], I am submitting the proposal for the second reader and program director of Walden University. They were asking me if the college agrees with me that I can do research in the college before they approve my proposal for IRB applications both Walden and [REDACTED]. I sent the letter to [REDACTED] z but nor reply yet. Ok I will talk to my chair again what to do next in the absence of prior agreement to conduct research before all approvals. Thanks

Joe

JOSELITO COQUILLA, MA
[REDACTED]
Instructor - Philosophy
[REDACTED]

On Jan 22, 2021, at 3:29 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Joe,

I do not have the authority to commit the college. [REDACTED] Institutional Review Board should approve all requests; I have copied them on this email [REDACTED] would suggest completing an application for an initial approval/commitment. The application and information is located at the following URL:

[REDACTED] [\[REDACTED\]edu/departments/institutional-review-board/](#)

Stay well.

[REDACTED]
Chair: Philosophy, Humanities, & Library Sciences
[REDACTED]
[Humanities Program](#)
[Philosophy Program](#)
[Faculty Senate Webpage](#)

 joselito.coquilla
Fri 1/22/2021 2:51 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Hi, [REDACTED]

I had a meeting with my dissertation chair, Dr Hammett and I told him if an email from my department chair (from you) can suffice as initial agreement with [REDACTED] partner for my research, and [REDACTED] will be the official agreement as approval to conduct research in the college. Dr. Hammett said, it is fine to have your email approval to have HCC as the partner college to do my research. Thus I will send a formal email for you to reply about such agreement request.

I sent an email to [REDACTED] last Monday but I did not hear anything from her yet. I have a meeting with my chair on Tuesday to plan for Walden IRB application. Thanks.

Joe

JOSELITO COQUILLA, MA

[REDACTED]
Instructor - Philosophy
[REDACTED]

joselito.coquilla
Mon 1/25/2021 4:13 PM

To: helen.graham

Hi, [REDACTED]

I discussed with my chair regarding my concern on the agreement with [REDACTED], and I was told that so long as the college is informed about it and IRB process will formally approved it. It will be fine.

I started working on the walden IRB and with [REDACTED] application and I come to the section on [REDACTED]. The guideline states, it could be a chair or dean where the research is done. Thus, I am formally requesting you to be my liaison of this study. If it is ok with you, I will put your name in the [REDACTED] application as the [REDACTED] (page 1 in the guidelines) together with your email and office phone number. Let me know if you have other suggestion or idea about this matter.

Thanks in advance!

Joe

JOSELITO COQUILLA, MA

[REDACTED]
Instructor - Philosophy
[REDACTED]



Mon 1/25/2021 4:19 PM

To: joselito.coquilla



Hi Joe,

You can list me as your liaison.

Stay well.



Chair: Philosophy, Humanities, & Library Sciences



[Humanities Program](#)

[Philosophy Program](#)

[Faculty Senate Webpage](#)

Appendix C: Request for Participant Contact Information for Doctoral Project Study

██████ IRB Approval Date: From December 10, 2021 to December 9, 2022

Walden University Approval # 09-2-21-0722807

Dr. ██████████
Vice-Chancellor
██

Re: Request for Research Participant Contact Information

Dear Dr. ██████████

I am a Walden University Doctor of Education and Leadership candidate specializing in Adult and Higher Education. I have obtained both Walden University IRB approval (#09-2-21-0722807) and ██████████ IRB approval (from December 10, 2021-December 9, 2022) to conduct a qualitative study to interview students, faculty, and administrators to evaluate the ████████ve aspects of ████████ Academic Success Program ([ASP] 2016 - 2020). My study's working title is *Evaluating the Qualitative Aspects of a Community College Academic Success Program*. The college's identity and location will be disguised using the pseudonym name of Southwest City Central Community College (SCCC), with a general location description of the southwestern United States. The benefits of the study include adding ASP evaluation information on the qualitative aspects of the ASP to the quantitative evaluation information already completed by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR).

Following the guidance of the ████████ OIR, I am writing to you to request that the Office of Student Services or Office of Instructional Services, as appropriate, provide me a list of eligible student, faculty, and administrator participants whom I can contact to explain the purpose of my study and invite to be a research participant. Eligibility criteria are provided below.

Student Eligibility: 18 years old and above with at least two semesters of enrollment between 2016 and 2020, inclusive.

I intend to interview a maximum of 16 participants. Ideally, my research proposal is to sample and interview 12 students purposefully. Assuming a 15% response rate, I would like to initially seek up to 80 student contacts who meet the criteria for participating in my study. Once I have recruited 16 participants, I will cease sending invitations. The email invitation will explain my study, participants' rights and potential risks, and the Informed Consent Form (attached). Once selected as a participant, I will review the Informed Consent before each interview.

As provided in the Informed Consent Form, I will preserve the college's confidentiality and privacy of all participants. Due to COVID protocols required by Walden University, I will use Zoom or telephone audio-only recordings for the interviews. I want to begin recruiting participants as soon as possible.

As per confidentiality requirements for research, when my study is published in ProQuest, no information will be included that could be used to identify participants or the participating institution. Any references in the bibliography, appendices, or elsewhere that could be used to identify the college will be redacted. Participation is strictly voluntary, and no costs will be incurred by either the college or the individual participants.

Your approval and cooperation in providing potential participants with contact information will be greatly appreciated. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. You may contact me at my email address: joselito.coquilla@waldenu.edu or by phone at 832-768-1263 and my Research Committee Chair, Dr. Richard Hammett richard.hammett@mail.waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

Joselito Coquilla
Walden University, Riley College of Education and Leadership doctoral candidate

Appendix D: Demographics and Participant Information Survey

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS**INFORMED CONSENT FORM AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION****Title: Evaluating the Qualitative Aspects of a Community College Academic Success Program**

My name is Joselito Coquilla and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am inviting you to participate in my research capstone titled *Evaluating the Qualitative Aspects of a Community College Academic Success Program*. You received the consent form explaining your rights as a participant in an email that invited you to complete this short survey.

By completing the survey and clicking the submit button at the survey's end, you are providing your informed consent to participate in the study. You will then be notified by e-mail and will be subsequently reaching out to you to schedule our interview.

I am seeking 8 - 10 student participants. The select-in criteria for student participation include:

- 1. [REDACTED] students who are 18 years old or older above**
- 2. [REDACTED] students with at least 2 semesters of study during the years 2016 - 2020.**

*** 1. Gender**

This information will help me select an equal or near-equal number of male and female participants for the study. ♡ 0

Male

Female

2. **Meets Minimum Age Requirement**

I attest that I am 18 years of age or older. ☺ ○

Yes

No

3. **Qualifying Enrollment**

I was enrolled at [REDACTED] (any campus) for at least two semesters from 2016 to 2020. ☺ ○

Yes

No

* 4. **Contact Information**

Your personal information will not be shared with anyone and your identification will be protected by coding all participants using pseudonyms or other participant codes.

Note: After I verify that you qualify for participation in the study, I may notify to confirm participation and set up our interview appointment. If you are selected for participation, I will confirm your contact information and desire to participate by sending you an email to the email address you provide below. ☺ ○

Full Name

Preferred Email Address

Preferred Phone
Number

SUBMIT

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Note: Portions in italics will be read to each participant. Portions that are not italicized are notes for the researcher.

Pre-Interview Logistics

Record the date, time, and location of the interview.

Date:

Time:

Location:

Introduction

After reading the Informed Consent Form and the survey, I have verified that you meet the criteria for participation in this study.

First, thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research study. I am conducting this study as a student at Walden University. My research is supervised by my research committee consisting of three university professors who hold their Doctor of Education degrees. This study is part of my Doctor of Education program. This study aims to qualitatively evaluate the college's academic success initiative goals that (a) attempted to integrate the 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum, (b) aimed to develop and implement exemplary customer service, and (c) sought to increased student completion by providing continuous guidance and feedback to students.

This interview will last no longer than 60 minutes and likely will be shorter. I may ask follow-up questions based on your responses to my questions. I want to remind you that your responses will be recorded using Windows 10 sound recorder through my laptop's microphone and speaker. Interviews will be backed up using the iPad app's digital recorder for transcription purposes.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Respond to any informed consent or procedural questions before beginning the interview.

Interview

RQ1: What are SCCC student perspectives and experiences about integrating 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum to improve student preparedness during the effective dates of the ASP?

One of the academic success program goals through 2020 was to integrate 21st-century skillsets across the curriculum.

IQ1: For students: *Please describe your experience in terms of courses that you have taken at SCCC.*

IQ2: For students: *Please share specific skills or skillsets that you learned, developed, or enhanced within one or more of your courses.*

RQ2: How do SCCC students perceive and experience the college's customer services in terms of improving the college experience for students?

Thank you. Another aspect of the Academic Success Program was to enhance the quality of student campus experiences by implementing exemplary customer service for students.

Accordingly, in this section, I will be asking you to share your overall impressions about the quality of customer service the college provides by its staff and faculty.

IQ3 For students: *Please describe any customer service experiences that stood out for you.*

RQ3: What are SCCC student perceptions and experiences about guidance and feedback provided to or received by students to facilitate the attainment of their career interests and goals?

Thank you. The last set of questions are related to SCCC's goal to increase student completion by providing continuous guidance and feedback to help students achieve their goals.

IQ5: For students: *Please share your career interests and goals that brought you to enroll at SCCC, and what were your expectations for the college for helping you accomplish your career plans?*

IQ6: For students: *Please describe any guidance and feedback you received while a student at the college that helped you achieve your goals. To help you think about this question, feedback and guidance could come from any school official or office. So, for example, you could have received guidance and feedback from academic advisors, registrar, student finance office, counselors, administrators, staff, and instructors, to name a few.*

IQ7: For students: *Please share specific instances when the guidance or feedback from the college seemed most relevant to you based on your career interests or academic goals.*

Conclude with the following statement:

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this interview. Once again, I want to reassure you that your identity will not be shared, and your responses are confidential. Once I have transcribed and analyzed our interview to produce qualitative themes, I will share the transcription and themes with you to check them for accuracy. This final member check should only take you a few minutes. Be assured that I will correct anything I have recorded to reflect better accuracy based on your feedback. If everything appears to be accurate, then all you need to do is respond that the transcript and thematic analysis are accurate from your perspective.

Appendix F: Protecting Human Research Participants Certificate



