

WASC Information-Gathering for the Student Affairs Division
Top 5 Initiatives List

Department: African American Student Center Submitted by: Katrina Hammonds

Initiative #1 of 5: African American Graduation Ceremony

a. Briefly describe the activity, project, or event, and its purpose. Suggest the WASC Standards and Cal Poly Pomona University Goals to which it is relevant.

Standard 4, Goal: 4

This event began in 1993. The graduation ceremony has and will continue to integrate traditional African rituals into a celebration that acknowledges that students of African descent have successfully completed their degree programs.

b. Why is this important to the Department and/or Division?

This activity promotes the student centered philosophy of the Division by allowing students to assist the Coordinator in planning the event. This activity is retention related. Students of African descent comprise approximately 4% of the overall student population. These relatively low numbers can create an alienating environment for students and lead to attrition.

c. Who benefits from it, and how??

The graduation ceremony serves as a symbol for students who are still matriculating, showing that they too can accomplish this goal despite the alienation and other obstacles. The specialized ceremony encourages students and their families to encourage future generations to pursue higher education. The traditional ceremony does not address the social and/or economic challenges that many students of African Descent must traverse. This ceremony does.

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Initiative #2 of 5: Cal Poly Ambassador Program

a. Briefly describe the activity, project, or event, and its purpose. Suggest the WASC Standards and Cal Poly Pomona University Goals to which it is relevant.

Standard 7, Goal: 1

The Cal Poly Ambassador Program began in November 1998. The first trip was in March 1999. Students traveled to Alabama and Atlanta to visit historical institutions and museums that highlight the Civil Rights Movement. The program is designed to expose Cal Poly students personally to institutions and movements that were created by African Americans and have had a benefit to the society as a whole. It goes beyond hearing about them and allows students to experience them.

b. Why is this important to the Department and/or Division?

The project is important to the Division because it merges the goals of Student Affairs with the goals of Academic Affairs..

d. Who benefits from it, and how??

Students and faculty benefit from the Cal Poly Ambassador Program. The Student Ambassadors were asked to maintain a detailed journal of their trip and describe their experiences in two Ethnic and Women's Studies courses during Spring Quarter 1999. This will allow the project participants to impact the students in these courses and develop their public speaking and leadership skills. The entire campus will be invited to a forum where the Ambassadors will share the impact their trip has on them.

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Initiative #3 of 5: Black History Month

a. Briefly describe the activity, project, or event, and its purpose. Suggest the WASC Standards and Cal Poly Pomona University Goals to which it is relevant.

Standard 4, Goal: 5

This series of activities and events began in or around 1991 at Cal Poly. During this month historical contributions that people of African descent have had on the world are highlighted.

b. Why is this important to the Department and/or Division?

The campus environment is enhanced when students of diverse backgrounds participate in events and lectures that are educational and entertaining. The fact that a student committee is responsible for the planning and implementation of the events is important to the “student centered” philosophy of the Division.

c. Who benefits from it, and how??

Students, staff and faculty benefit from Black History Month because it gives them access to programs and activities where sharing between cultures can and does occur.

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Initiative #4 of 5: Casino Night

a. Briefly describe the activity, project, or event, and its purpose. Suggest the WASC Standards and Cal Poly Pomona University Goals to which it is relevant.

Standard 9, Goal: 2

This event was held in November 1998 and will be an annual fund-raiser for the Cultural Centers. The purpose was to raise funds and promote teamwork between the Centers.

b. Why is this important to the Department and/or Division?

The Division benefits from the event because it truly embodies the concept of teamwork. This multicultural event was a success in many ways. One of the most overwhelming moments was watching students and staff from diverse cultures and backgrounds working to clean up the venue. We can work together and be successful.

c. Who benefits from it, and how??

Students, staff, and faculty benefit from the existence of the African American Student Center and the events and projects that it implements. Activities like Casino Night will enable the AASC to continue servicing the campus community by raising funds.

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Initiative #5 of 5: Student Case Management

a. Briefly describe the activity, project, or event, and its purpose. Suggest the WASC Standards and Cal Poly Pomona University Goals to which it is relevant.

Standard 7, Goal: 4

Student case management has occurred since the Center opened in 1995. A formal recording of student contacts, referrals, and outcomes began Fall Quarter 1999. The Coordinator meets privately with students who express a need for help. The students share their most pressing issues and are assisted or given referrals to the appropriate staff, faculty, or community based agency. The Coordinator follows up with each student and records the main details on a form. The purpose of case management is to assist students in resolving issues that can ultimately lead to attrition.

b. Why is this important to the Department and/or Division?

Student case management is important to the Division because it is totally student-centered and supports the students' academic success.

c. Who benefits from it, and how??

Students and faculty benefit from student case management. Students who are in distress or need guidance can receive the necessary support and ultimately be more productive in their classes.