

**B. OBJECTIVES****1. OBJECTIVE ONE: PERSISTENCE RATE**

*65% of all participants served in the reporting year by the SSS project will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or earn an associate's degree or certificate at the grantee institution and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution by the fall term of the next academic year.*

**AMBITIOUS:** A persistence rate of 65% is very ambitious; however, increasing retention rates is one of the primary purposes of the Student Support Services Project. As discussed on page 11, only 54.5% of SSS eligible students persist to their second year. In addition to low persistence rates, SSS eligible students have a graduation rate of only 7.3% (Table 7, page 12). Studies show that the use of multiple measures for course placement, career counseling, and defining an educational goal (counseling), academic support services (tutoring) and creating opportunities to increase a student's feeling of belonging (social and cultural activities) promote a positive sense of identity and enhance the student's retention at the institution.

**ATTAINABLE:** This objective is obtainable by providing the comprehensive services identified and supported by the SSS grant, many of the barriers that cause these students to leave college will be reduced. These services are described in detail on pages 18-39 of the *Plan of Operation*. They include structured comprehensive first year services, tutoring and Academic Success Seminars at the COS Academic Success Center, financial aid advising and financial literacy topic workshops, personal and career counseling, academic and transfer advising, university campus visits/tours, and cultural and academic activities. SSS staff will utilize the student information system (Banner) necessary to gather essential data, monitor students' progress, and follow up with appropriate support services to meet participants' needs.

**2. OBJECTIVE TWO: GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING RATE**

*75% of all enrolled SSS participants served will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.*

**AMBITIOUS:** Academic good standing is defined at COS as a cumulative 2.0 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) and/or completion of 50% of the units attempted. This objective, which requires that 75% of participants achieve a cumulative 2.0 grade point average and 50% course completion rate, is ambitious because low-income, first generation students (SSS eligible) at COS have lower grade point averages (Table 6, page 11) and course completion academic success rates (Table 2, page 4) than the not SSS eligible student population.

Based on institutional knowledge students continue to experience barriers which can hinder their academic standing. Barriers include but are not limited to: local weather conditions; lack of family support; lack of personal and/or public transportation; limited STEM course availability and course offered outside of traditional hours; and lack of time management and study skills. Without basic academic skills support first time and reentry students alike face the challenge of understanding the rigor of transfer level coursework.

**ATTAINABLE:** This objective is attainable due to the level of support committed for academic and tutorial services, as outlined in the *Plan of Operation*. In addition, math and English faculty have implemented embedded tutors and necessary remediation within their courses. Research indicates that academic success improves with regular and consistent tutoring assistance (individually and through the math and writing labs in the College's Academic Success Center) with academic concepts. Through the provision of intensive academic counseling, student success workshops, financial planning assistance,

tutorial services, and participant follow up, we are confident that SSS students can improve their academic success.

It is also attainable because the College's Early Academic Alert processes identify those students who are not performing satisfactorily at the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the semester. Those students will be contacted for follow-up and intervention. The SSS Director, Counselor, and Coordinator will be available throughout the semester for instructor feedback on SSS student progress and/or as the students themselves seek help, support, and referral to appropriate academic services. Students who are on academic or progress dismissal at the College must see an SSS Counselor to determine the reason they are on probation and complete a plan for academic success. Additionally, the SSS staff has a comprehensive data base which allows them to track students' mid-semester progress as well as the GPAs of all participants each semester. Open and frequent communication between the SSS staff and instructors will also help students maintain good academic standing and experience academic success.

### **3. OBJECTIVE THREE: GRADUATION/TRANSFER RATES**

*(1) 25% of new participants served each year will graduate from the grantee institution with an associate's degree or certificate within four (4) years; and (2) 22% of new participants served each year will receive an associate's degree or certificate from the grantee institution and transfer to a four-year institution within four (4) years.*

**AMBITIOUS:** The graduation rate at COS between Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 for first generation students was 7.3% (Table 7, page 12). Data shows that just 10.4% of SSS eligible first generation students transferred to a four year institution (Table 8, page 12). Based on institutional knowledge COS has found students are not confident in their math skills and ability to complete transfer level courses. As a result students have been less likely to complete math

requirements for transfer.

**ATTAINABLE:** This objective is attainable due to the development of a comprehensive support services project that is outlined in the *Plan of Operation*. Multiple measure assessment places the majority of non-STEM students directly into degree applicable transferable level math and English courses. For COS students with low academic skill levels, it took up to six courses to reach transfer level math prior to the implementation of multiple measures. Course sequences were shortened for math (Fall 2017) and English (Fall 2019) through curriculum modifications, which include embedded tutoring and lab time to support remediation.

Accurate and early educational planning insures timely completion of the graduation and transfer plan. Other key support services that will aid students include (1) academic tutoring; (2) career, transfer and financial aid counseling; (3) financial literacy workshops; (4) college campus tours; (5) transfer workshops; and (6) assistance with the financial aid and university application processes. The budget reflects the resources necessary to implement these support services with the collaboration of both on campus and off campus community resources.

This objective is specific about the measures to be attained; and is measurable. Graduation rates are easily attained through local and statewide data and/or through the help of the Office of Institutional Research. Transfer rates are attained through follow-up services by the SSS staff and through the National Student Clearinghouse, which will allow us to track the progress of SSS (and other) students.