

California State University, Stanislaus
Stockton Center Analysis/Assessment Plan
Office of Institutional Research
June 17, 2009

Introduction

The Stockton Center is the officially recognized regional education center of the California State University, Stanislaus. Administered by California State University, Stanislaus, the Stockton Center has had a physical presence in San Joaquin County since 1974. The Stockton Center offers courses and programs at the upper division, graduate level, and credential level. The administrative head is the executive director of CSU Stanislaus-Stockton who reports to the CSU Stanislaus Provost/VPAA.

Stockton Center Program

The Stockton Center provides 6 Bachelor of Arts programs, 2 Bachelor of Science programs. It offers 4 teacher credential programs, and 3 Master's Degree programs. In addition, the College of Business Administration offers graduate courses toward the Master of Business Administration (MBA), as well as an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) through University Extended Education.

Classes are taught by CSU Stanislaus faculty, CSU Stanislaus-Stockton resident faculty, or experienced part-time faculty who have taught for CSU Stanislaus-Stockton for at least two years. In fall 2008, the Stockton Center had 13 resident faculty members, 23 part-time faculty, and 17 full-time faculty. Seven staff employees provide support services to students and faculty, as well as maintaining the facilities. The Stockton Center offers a total 104 courses. About one-third of the courses are distance education (ITV courses). The Stockton Center also has a Library Access Center, health services, bookstore, and computer labs to support teaching and learning.

Key Analysis Questions

A general notion about Stockton Center students suggests they are either different from, have different needs from, or evidence different performance outcomes compared to the main Turlock campus students. (California State University Stanislaus-Stockton, Administrative and Academic Support Unit Review, *The Self-Study Report: Phase 1*, April, 2005, page 8, 39; Meetings of the *WASC, CSU Stanislaus, Capacity and Preparatory Review*, September 30 – October 3, 2008). These notions have not before been tested. Thus, the analysis and assessment plan outlines the methodology to test the null hypothesis that there are no differences.

The notion of “difference” is an interesting one. The Stockton Center, while providing valuable educational services and classes, is limited in the range of degree-majors offered, and credential and graduate programs offered. It is reasonable therefore to pose the following questions: Are the students that enroll in Stockton a self-select group, attracted

perhaps by specially designed programs housed and offered at the Center to meet the growing needs of the local community? Or, are students taking courses at Stockton strictly due to convenience?

In what respects are Stockton Center students different from the main Turlock campus students? And if significantly different, does this mean the performance or learning outcomes also differ? Is there a relationship and if so, why?

The nature of the differences may be wholly driven by convenience, that is to say, since the Center is located in the city of Stockton, the Center may serve a different population group because of its location and design of specific programs to serve the city-area. The question-answer may be a tautology—they are different because they are. Even so, important also to understand analytically is that while differences may be identified by certain demographic or background parameters, this does not mean the performance or learning outcomes of students will be different. The outcomes may be statistically insignificant. These notions are anyway testable.

These questions will be explored. The quantitative analysis will start a simple approach and analyze data from the Enrollment Reporting System for Off-campus centers (ERSO) and the Enrollment Reporting System Students (ERSS) for all university students. Both datasets represent the official census of enrolled students during each semester of the university. (ERSO is a subset of the ERSS census file.) The analysis will focus on fall semester enrollments.

For purposes of analysis, operationally defined the Stockton Center student is enrolled in one or more courses at the Stockton campus. The student, therefore, may be a full-time or part-time student, and may be enrolled in one or all courses at the Stockton Center. This definition, for instance, gives a total official headcount of 824 students for the fall 2008 semester. The ERSS census file reports a total 8,601 students for the fall 2008 semester (this includes the Stockton Center students as reported in ERSO).

A second level of analysis will operationally define the Stockton Center student as enrolled full-time and taking all courses at the Stockton Center. This definition reveals a total 134 undergraduate and postgraduate students in fall 2008. This group will be compared to a similarly defined group of main campus students.

Facts about the Stockton Center Today

We first note an important event likely to drive changes in the enrollment patterns of students. Due to the current economic recession and the California state budget crisis, student enrollment is being managed downward and severely impacting the Stockton Center—from 1,110 enrolled students in fall 2007 to 824 enrolled students in fall 2008. This represents a drop of 286 students, or decrease of 26 percent.

A downward trend in enrollment due to budget cuts (and perhaps increased student fees) is likely to change future enrollment and course-taking patterns. Be that as it may, here are some facts briefly describing Stockton Center students and main campus student today as derived from the fall 2008 Enrollment Reporting System (ERSO, ERSS).

- About 71 percent of Stockton Center enrollment is female, compared to 65.6 percent for the university (all levels).
- In terms of age, Stockton Center students are much older with an average age of 31.5 years, compared to 25.7 years for the main campus students.
- Hispanic students accounted for 24.5 percent of fall 2008 enrollment at Stockton, compared to 28.2 percent Hispanic for the university; 38 percent are white non-Hispanic students, compared to 40.6 percent white non-Hispanic students for the university; and 13 percent of Stockton Center students are Asian/Pacific Islander, compared to 11.4 percent for the entire university.
- A sizable majority of Stockton undergraduate enrollment is part-time—86 percent, compared to only 27.5 percent of students university-wide. At the Stockton Center, about 80 percent of graduate students (Master's) are enrolled part-time compared to 50.3 percent for the university as a whole.
- In terms of institution of origin for the Stockton Center, 94 percent of undergraduate transfers are from community colleges (primarily, San Joaquin Delta College) and 69 percent are women, compared to 88.6 percent university-wide from community colleges, and of these 63 percent are women.

In summary, what is apparent according to these few background characteristics of students is the differences are real rather than apparent. But the key question to ask is whether or not these differences imply different educational experiences? More to the point, would this mean the performance outcomes would also differ?

Analysis Plan

Proposed is a comprehensive analysis and assessment plan of the Stockton Center student experience and performance outcomes. The plan will unfold in several ways. The first step is to describe the characteristics of the different student populations—Stockton Center and main campus. This means comparing Stockton Center students to the main campus students and to statistically test whether or not the populations are different.

The second step is to apply correlation and linear regression analyses to understand the correlates in the variation of learning outcomes according to selected indicators such as, graduation rates, writing proficiency testing, campus GPA, and total (cumulative) GPA. The intent is to identify the performance outcomes of each student population and to explain any differences between them. (In the analysis SAT scores may serve as a baseline proxy indicator to compare a measure of preparedness coming into the university system. High school GPA could also be used in this way. The student populations will be tested for statistically significant differences. Where appropriate, multiple regression will control for differences on certain key variables.)

A third step is to take a qualitative methods approach and observe and interview Stockton Center students about their educational experiences at the Center and compare those with the main Turlock campus.

In terms of assessment of experiences and learning outcomes the plan will incorporate both direct and indirect methods of analysis in examining educational experiences and performance outcomes from a sample of Stockton Center students. This activity will draw from many approaches as presented in Linda Suskie's, *Assessing Student Learning*, (Anker Publishing Company, Inc., 2004). The assessment activity will coordinate with the program assessment coordinators in the scheduling of data collection and analysis for this plan.

Direct measures may come from a variety of approaches and will be identified in consultation with the program assessment coordinators, such as, scores and pass rates on appropriate licensure or certification exams or other screening tests such as the writing proficiency screening test (WPST); Capstone courses or senior seminars where research projects, presentations, exhibitions, or performances, are scored using a rubric (guide, standards); other written work or performances, scored using a rubric; portfolios of student work are collected and scored or rated; pre- and post-test assessment of student knowledge where gain scores are measured. Measures or ratings of student values, attitudes, perceptions, and/or beliefs may be used if these are intended outcomes of the course or program.

A variety of approaches may target *indirect measures* of student learning and educational experiences, such as, course grades; assignment grades (if not accompanied by a rubric or scoring guide); retention and graduation rates for programs; placement rates of graduates into appropriate career positions and starting salaries; alumni perceptions of their career responsibilities and satisfaction; student ratings of their knowledge and skills; student ratings of their program major and reflections on what they have learned over the course of the program; course evaluations such as the IDEA; student and alumni satisfaction surveys, exit interviews, or focus groups; students participation rates in faculty research, publications, and conference presentations; honors, awards, and scholarships earned by students and alumni.

Concluding Remarks

To conclude, the planned quantitative analysis will produce an enrollment profile of Stockton Center students and of the main campus students. The analysis will produce a descriptive summary of Stockton Center Students for the fall term (trend analysis where appropriate). It will display enrollment tables by program major, gender, ethnicity, age group, full-time/part-time status, and institution of origin. It will display tables for GPA, and retention and graduation rates, and degrees earned.

Where possible, the analysis will glean information from various university-wide surveys focusing on Stockton Center student respondents. These data will provide information about educational experiences and perceptions of the Center and university. The assessment plan includes the administration of a Stockton Center Student Survey that will further explore student engagement, student satisfaction, and rating of programs and support services.

In the qualitative analysis, the assessment will include meetings and interviews with the Stockton Advisory Group about the typical student profile, services, and the Stockton Center. The assessment will include conducting focus group interviews with various student and faculty groups from the Stockton Center.