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The Research & Planning Group  
for California Community Colleges

# Transfer Practices at Los Angeles Southwest College

**Case Study #3 of 7 Featuring Colleges with  
Consistently Higher Than Expected Transfer Rates  
Fall 2008**



**Part of the Transfer Leadership Center Project**

**Funded by the State Chancellor's Office of the California  
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**Prepared by the Center for Student Success of the Research & Planning Group  
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**Abstract:** This report is one in a series of seven case studies of California community colleges with higher-than-expected transfer rates. Each case study is based on a site visit conducted in Spring 2008 by two Center for Student Success researchers to document and investigate the full spectrum of factors, inventions, strategies and practices that each college is implementing to support transfer.

The case studies are part of the Transfer Leadership Center (TLC), the most comprehensive study to date of two-to-four-year transfer in California.

The California Community College State Chancellor's Office awarded the TLC in Spring 2007, based on a competitive grant competition and grant written by Dr. Andreea Serban, Superintendent/President, Santa Barbara City College. The project has been implemented by the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges (CCC), the Center for Student Success (CSS) of the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, and California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-Pass). The study is administered by the Santa Barbara City College and guided by an Advisory Committee including leading experts on transfer.

**Readers of the case study presented here may also be interested in the following, which are available on-line at <http://www.rpgroup.org/css/TransferLeadershipCenter.html> and <http://www.sbcc.edu/tlc>**

- TLC Literature Review
- TLC Cross-Case Analysis (an analysis of all seven colleges in the study)
- TLC Case Study #1: De Anza College
- TLC Case Study #2: Irvine Valley College
- TLC Case Study #3: Los Angeles Southwest College
- TLC Case Study #4: Porterville College
- TLC Case Study #5: Reedley College
- TLC Case Study #6: San Diego City College
- TLC Case Study #7: Skyline College

**For questions about any of these research papers, please contact Dr. Andreea Serban at [Serban@sbcc.edu](mailto:Serban@sbcc.edu) or Eva Schiorring at [ESchiorring@rpgroup.org](mailto:ESchiorring@rpgroup.org)**

## LOS ANGELES SOUTHWEST COLLEGE TRANSFER PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES CASE STUDY

**Introduction:** In Spring 2007, the State Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges awarded the Transfer Leadership Center (TLC) study to investigate two-to-four year transfer practices and strategies. As part of the study's qualitative component, research teams from the Center for Student Success of the Research & Planning Group of the California Community Colleges conducted site visits to seven community colleges with higher-than-expected transfer rates. The site visits included extensive interviews and focus groups conducted with students, college counselors, faculty, administrators, classified staff, representatives from special programs, and high school counselors.

It should be emphasized that the research focused exclusively on what each of the seven colleges are doing to support and increase two-to-four year transfer. Accordingly, the case study that follows should be read not as an assessment of the featured college's overall performance, but rather as a review and analysis of one particular area of operations. Moreover, the case studies focus on what appeared to the researchers to be the most salient elements of the colleges' efforts to encourage and support transfer. The case studies are therefore not intended to present an exhaustive list of all transfer-related initiatives and practices at each college.

In addition to case studies on each of the seven colleges, the research team developed a cross-case analysis to identify common factors which appear to contribute to higher-than-expected transfer rates. The cross-case analysis – as well as the research protocols and the literature review upon which the protocols were based – can be found at <http://www.sbcc.edu/tlc>

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## CASE STUDY: LOS ANGELES SOUTHWEST COLLEGE

<b>Los Angeles Southwest College</b>
<b>President:</b> Dr. Jack E. Daniels, III
<b>Southern Region:</b> Los Angeles, CA
<b>District:</b> Los Angeles Community College District
<b>Fall 2007 Enrollment:</b> 6,353
<b>Ethnicity:</b> 68% - African American 25% - Latino 1% - White 6% - Other
<b>Gender</b> 74% - Female 26% - Male
<b>Age</b> 29% - Under 20 22% - 20 to 24 13% - 25 to 29 9% - 30 to 34 27% - 35 and older
<b>Faculty</b> 58 Full-Time and 200 Part-Time
<b>Counselors</b> 9 FTEs, including categorical counselors

### SUMMARY

“The environment around us is telling us to stop what you are doing but if you’re around the right people motivating you to move on...and you’re looking at that’s what you don’t want to be – you’ll be in the situation that we’re in now – trying to leave and transfer out.”

– *LASC Student, March 2008*

In an urban, economically disadvantaged area where only 11 % of the residents have a baccalaureate degree and the image of South Central LA is one of crime and gang violence, Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) is a place where students can come to find support and create a path towards improving their situation with an education.

Being a small college based on enrollment, LASC is close to their students and the community. The President stated transfer is a priority and part of the fabric of the college. This was echoed in all the groups on campus we interviewed. LASC recognizes that many of their students may not be “transfer-oriented.” But their mission statement is “enriching lives” and they have embraced transfer as a way to enrich their students’ lives.

The Center for Retention and Transfer (CRT) is dedicated to the goal of transfer and they are supported by a TRIO grant. The CRT budget is robust and they are able to provide a variety of services including classroom presentations, workshops, college fairs and campus visits. The program has two dedicated full-time counselors in addition to two part-time counselors in a dedicated office

space. The CRT is integrated into the college community. Counselors, faculty and staff from other offices refer students to the CRT.

LASC has a variety of other services and strategies that support transfer. Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS) works closely with the CRT and many students are enrolled in both programs. Like the CRT, EOPS provides additional counseling support as well as financial support to the students. These programs have had a tremendous affect on the students who have participated and students in these programs are passionate about their praises for the programs and how they have helped them to succeed.

LASC also utilizes their Personal Development courses to support transfer. These courses are designed around teaching students the importance of education, how it can affect their lives and learning to understand and master common processes they need such as applying to four-year institutions and being a successful student.

Many students coming into LASC are assessing into the very low levels of developmental education. LASC has not only embraced transfer but transfer for students at the basic skills level. Additionally, once a student is closer to transfer administrators spoke to the importance of offering courses students need to transfer. They try not to cancel higher-level courses so students are able to complete their transfer-required courses at LASC.

LASC has a Middle College High School on the campus as well as a Talent Search program which serves approximately 600 students at the surrounding high schools. Both of these programs make for strong connections to the high schools. There is additionally a strong sentiment that LASC is truly a part of the community it serves. Many of the employees at LASC live in the surrounding community and know the families of the students who have come to LASC. Graduates of LASC have come back to work on campus and their children have attended LASC.

The close proximity to and relationships formed with CSU Dominguez Hills make for a strong connection with LASC, and this university is LASC's top transfer institution.

**Factors and Indicators Contributing to Higher-Than-Expected Transfer Rates at Los Angeles Southwest College**

<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>INDICATORS</b>
<b>Student-focused environment</b>	➤ <b>Personal touch and willingness to take extra steps to help students succeed</b>
<b>Transfer culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Belief that transfer is possible for their students</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Encouragement to go beyond the Bachelor's degree</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Support not only for academic success but personal growth to prepare students to be emotionally prepared for transferring</b></li> </ul>
<b>Strong, strategic relationship with local high schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Middle College High School has close relationship with high school population at the campus</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Well-developed Talent Search Program that outreaches to many feeder high schools and bring many students to LASC</b></li> </ul>
<b>Strong relationship with four-year universities</b>	➤ <b>Strong relationship with Cal State Dominguez Hills – from the faculty, staff and students</b>

<p><b>Support services/programs that emphasize transfer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>EOPS – complements and supports other existing programs</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Athletes are another group who receives support to enable them to be recruited and transfer</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Personal Development classes support transfer</b></li> <li>➤ <b>The Center for Retention and Transfer (CRT) is a TRIO-funded program</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>High level of commitment to institution and shared sense of organizational purpose</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>President makes transfer a priority and would like to institutionalize the funding of the CRT</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Many LASC employees live in the surrounding community and have a strong commitment to the families and students</b></li> </ul>

## 1. METHODOLOGY

The site visit was conducted Feb 10 and 11, 2008. It included 15 interviews and three focus groups with a total of 33 participants. In preparation for the site visit, the research team reviewed the LASC 2006 Self-Study, the 2008 Progress Report on Accreditation Recommendations, the college website and other documents relevant to transfer. Documents provided by the college during the site visit were subsequently reviewed such as statistical information provided by the institutional researcher, flyers and other information provided by the Transfer Center, such as the CRT Transfer Guide. Appendix 2 provides a list of documents used to generate the case study.

## 2. COLLEGE OVERVIEW

### 2a. Community and College Profile

**The College Community:** Located in South Central Los Angeles, Los Angeles Southwest College is one of the newest and smallest colleges in the nine-member Los Angeles Community College District. Credited to 20 years of work by dedicated community activists, in 1967 the Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District voted to create LASC.

LASC's service area is urban and economically disadvantaged. It includes parts of the City of Los Angeles as well as portions of the cities of Gardena, Hawthorne and Inglewood, in addition to unincorporated sections of the County of Los Angeles. The primary feeder high schools are Crenshaw, Washington, Inglewood, Jordan, Locke, Locke Continuation, Middle College, and Morningside. Based on the 2000 census, the median income for the LASC service area was \$27,273, compared to \$42,289 for Los Angeles County as a whole. In the LASC service area, 11% of the residents hold a Baccalaureate Degree.

**Student Profile:** LASC's student population is young, economically disadvantaged and largely African-American and female. The service area of the college is approximately 55% Hispanic and 35% African-American, but LASC's Fall 2006 student population were 28% Hispanic and 62% African-American. The Hispanic population has grown rapidly in this area but the representation of Hispanics at LASC has not mirrored the area's ethnic make-up. The current President has recognized this and has initiatives in place to address this discrepancy. He stated that in the past year the representation of Hispanic students has grown approximately 10%. The ratio of women to men in the student body is three-to-one. LASC has recently initiated a program to support the male population on campus as well as trying to actively recruit more men into LASC.

**Mission Statement:** "Los Angeles Southwest College is committed to providing an environment for quality learning to enrich the lives of our diverse population."

"I think we do a very good job of follow-up with our students... we are keenly aware of our state systems' #1 educational goal to transfer students to a four-year system, but for us it's a more personal thing. We want our students to achieve. Our school's mission is 'enriching lives.'"

– *LASC Counselor*

"Our goal is to incorporate everyone in the process...encouragement is major"

– *Transfer Center Counselor*

Administrators and counselors spoke about the diverse population they serve and how important it is to identify the needs of the students before they counsel or provide advice. They stated that many of their students are the first in their family to come to college, many are single parents and many are the sole breadwinners for large families. They have students of all ages and backgrounds who come in with a varying range of preparation and goals. The philosophy we heard often is to take students from where they are "at" and to provide them the information and support to help them achieve their goals and maybe to realize goals they did not think were possible, such as transfer.

## 2b. Transfer Profile

**Transfer Indicators:** Appendix 4 presents the residual and actual transfer rates for student cohorts that started as freshmen at LASC between the academic years of 1998-99 and 2000-01.

In the LASC service area, 11% of the population have a Bachelor's degree and approximately 60% of the population are 25 years old and older.

Additional data from the California Postsecondary Education Commission shows that transfer to UCs and CSUs between 2001-02 and 2005-06 have ranged from a low of 161 students in 2003-04 to a high of 198 in 2006-2007. The percentage of transfers continuing to a UC has ranged from between 3% to 5% of all transfers to in-state public institutions. The transfers to the public institutions in California from LASC are mostly African-American and Hispanic. Although Hispanic transfer students have slowly crept up to more than 15% of the UC/CSU transfers, the African American transfers have stayed steady around 75%.

**Transfer Center, Articulation and Counseling Staff:** The Center for Retention and Transfer (CRT) has been funded by a TRIO grant for approximately 18 years. It is located on the second floor of the Student Services Building near the Counseling offices and on the same floor as EOPS. As the college has received two bonds to build up their campus in the next few years, one of the projects will be a new Student Services Building which will house the CRT.

The CRT Coordinator started at LASC in 2005 and works 50% as the coordinator of the center and 50% as a counselor in the center. The CRT Coordinator works with one other full-time counselor who is also the Middle College counselor and the Honors Program counselor. The CRT has one part-time counselor who works with their walk-in students, one technician/administrative support and three student workers who are similar to Peer Advisors (they are students from four-year universities).

There are approximately 14 full-time counselors who work at the college and two full-time counselors work in the CRT. There are five full-time generalist counselors in the counseling office. There are two full-time counselors in EOPS, two in CalWORKS, one in DSPS, one in Matriculation and the Articulation Officer is also a counselor. All the counselors have a meeting once a month to discuss and share information. All of the counselors can do transfer advising but they do refer students to the CRT.

As the CRT is a TRIO-funded program they are regulated by the grant requirements and are required to serve 250 students. These students are enrolled in the CRT and need to fulfill at least two counseling appointments and attend two workshops or field trips such as the college fairs or campus visits each semester. The CRT Coordinator estimates that of the students they serve, approximately 30% are new students in their first year at the college and 70% use the center closer to the time they are ready to transfer.

The Transfer Center function and activities were described by the TC Coordinators as including:

- Transfer Counseling
- Classroom Presentations on transfer at the beginning, middle and end of the semester
- Conducting Transfer Workshops – every month they have one to two different topics
- Coordination and Promotion of Transfer Fairs – twice a year
- Campus Representative Visits
- Campus Field Trips – Local CSUs, UCLA, USC, Claremont Colleges
- Coordination of Women's Discussion Group and support for Men's Group (Brothers Beyond the Color)
- Coordination of Stipend Program – if a student qualifies by maintaining a certain GPA attending CRT workshops or field trips and/or completes other requirements he or she will receive a monetary grant at the end of the semester.
- Blumen – software to keep track of student's progress (counseling visits, workshops, and coursework, GPA)

## **2c. Transfer Investments**

The CRT has been funded by several TRIO grants over the past 18 years. The CRT is in the fourth year of this current grant cycle. The general budget for the 2007-2008 academic year is approximately \$417,000. Two full-time counselors, as well as two part-time counselors and peer advisors support this grant. Administrative support and campus visits and field trips also are covered in the grant.

One unique aspect of the TRIO grant supporting the CRT are student stipends. If a student qualifies at the end of the semester (based on their GPA and coursework) he or she will receive a stipend between \$100 and \$750. Many students in the focus group voiced that having a stipend and financial assistance was beneficial for them.

## **2d. The Student Transfer Experience**

Two student focus groups were conducted during our site visit. The students who were invited to participate were enrolled in CRT and/or EOPS. Eleven students participated in the discussion and the diverse backgrounds of these students reflected what we heard from many of the administrators and staff of the college. The students were coming to LASC at very different points in their lives. The students we spoke to found the CRT very helpful and that the many benefits of the CRT helped increase their transfer aspirations.

Four of the students were non-traditional in the respect that they were coming back to college after having a career and wanting to improve their employment opportunities. Two of these students were going into nursing, another into counseling and another into engineering. There were about five students who were coming to LASC and were younger in age, mainly in their early 20s, and of this group two had come straight from high school and the others had been working and in and out of other schools before coming to LASC. In this group there were two single mothers who were taking care of three or more children as well as being a major provider for their family. Two students were taking care of many younger siblings as they had parents who were not in good health, and one student waited to come back to LASC because she was not able to get financial aid since she was not a US citizen. Although from varying backgrounds, the majority of these students had the goal of transferring to a university. Some came to LASC with a goal to transfer, but many discovered this goal as they took classes or spoke with a counselor. They all spoke of the impact the CRT had on their lives.

One of the students in the focus group was a single parent of eight children and she had the following quote:

“Thanks to Southwest we are so well-connected, we have so many resources. I would have never imagined two years ago I would have completed my major and my minor and three counseling certifications. I can not express to you the feeling that they give you when you come here – you come here young and you have no clue... you come after your life is in shambles and you have no clue. You see this long dark road ahead of you and don’t see the other side but when you can see the other side, it’s an amazing feeling... I’ll have my Bachelor’s in about six months because I’ve completed the majority of my programs through Southwest – due to the CRT counselors.”

– CRT and EOPS Student

The students all found the CRT offices in various ways, such as seeing a classroom presentation on transfer, having friends who were enrolled in the CRT, taking a Personal Development class or just wandering the halls of the Student Services building and finding the office. Some said the EOPS office referred them to CRT if they did not qualify for the EOPS program.

Being enrolled in CRT or EOPS these students were actively involved in many of the activities provided by the CRT. To qualify for the CRT program they needed to have at least two counseling

appointments and attend two workshops or activities. The students spoke about the importance of having a well-developed educational plan and that they used their educational plan each semester to schedule their coursework.

Another important part of CRT program was the faculty progress reports which they received at the eighth week of the semester. These progress reports helped the students identify if they were falling behind in a class and where they could receive addition help.

In a short survey, the students identified the Center for Retention and Transfer, Counselors and EOPS as being the most important services that supported transfer at LASC. Of slightly less importance but still high on the factors that are important to transfer were faculty and peer counselors. Several students specifically mentioned the college fairs and campus visits as other important services that helped them prepare for transfer.

Many of the students expressed that they had a lot of difficulty with their math classes and it was a major obstacle to transferring. Most of these students reported utilizing tutoring to help them get through Math and other subjects.

### **3. COLLEGE CULTURE**

#### **3a. Messages and Information About Transfer**

##### **Informal, College-Wide Support for Transfer:**

“A very big focus is on making them (students) aware of their abilities that will be able to take them to transfer. Students here do not grow up in families who are college-educated and have everything mapped out for them. Some of them don’t even think about it. So, it’s our goal to bring it to their attention and reinforce our belief and knowledge they can achieve that.”

– *LASC Counselor*

A large percentage of the student population LASC serves comes in at the basic skills level. Although it may seem that transfer is a far-off possibility, the interviewees all believed it was possible for their students. They emphasized focusing on the students and taking them from where they are to where they can be. We heard this sentiment echoed in many interviews. One of the CRT counselors discussed her perspective of starting to talk about transfer with students who are in the basic skills classes.

“I prefer, to be honest with you, that’s where I start, I begin at the beginning, my classroom presentations are conducted in the basic skills classes, that’s what works for me, because you are introducing students to the possibility, okay they enter, they score at the remedial level, and they have a 1.9 GPA and they hang out in the quad area and never go to class...however if you conduct a classroom presentation on USC and scholarships that are available and tell them you know students who started out just like them, it breaks the ice and they come see me...I want to provide them hope.”

– *CRT Counselor*

She also emphasized giving students the information multiple times and making classroom presentations on transfer at the beginning, middle and end of the semester. The collaboration with the CRT and the faculty is also an important element to make this work. The CRT counselor reported that without the support of faculty, she would not be able to go into the classrooms and get this message to students. Finally, she recognized that it’s important to ask faculty if she can come to their classrooms and always writes a thank-you note to them for letting her present during their class time.

**High School Support of Culture:** LASC recently hired a dedicated Outreach Coordinator. This position was established to strengthen the outreach with LAUSD, Parent Center, community-based organizations and church or faith-based organizations. The Outreach Coordinator goes out to the high schools and teaches students the **VALUE** of coming to LASC. This acronym stands for the following:

V: Vocational Programs

A: Academic Programs

L: Location (close to the community)

U: Undecided (if you are undecided, LASC is a good place to figure out what you want to do)

E: Economics (LASC is a good value as the cost per unit is lower and is more affordable)

LASC offers classes at 15 high schools campuses. They work with the principals at the schools to find out what courses can help the high schools as well as be mutually beneficial for the college. Additionally, LASC has also recently established a free CAHSEE program for anyone who did not pass the CAHSEE exam and did not get a high school diploma.

### **3b. Transfer Goals and Plan**

LASC President Dr. Jack E. Daniels III states: "Transfer, I have made a priority. It's in our strategic plan. It's a necessary component of any community college... it is part of the fabric of the college." The CRT is similar to most transfer centers in providing as much information and counseling on transfer and identifying the specific support services they need for their population. But one aspect that may be specific to LASC is that the personal approach to students is very important.

"This is a very small community, people don't move out too much... part of our secret is we're a small campus and we know how to care for people...we assume they need to transfer, they come to us deficient in academics, they come to us with eighth-grade reading skills, our challenge is to keep them in these classes, motivated so they move on to the transfer level courses."

– *LASC Administrator*

The CRT Coordinator and counselors discussed how students come to LASC and one of the major challenges is the students' own self-esteem and providing them as much information as possible to succeed. In addition to helping them academically, they are concerned with developing the student as a person. They fully understand that many of these students lack not only academic skills but also social skills that are needed to understand the processes involved with higher education.

Many of the CRT workshops are focused on the process of transitioning to college. The CRT counselors explained that she conducts a workshop called "Hurry Up and Wait" where she tells students that this is the model for many things in education and life. For example, you need to make sure you hurry to apply for financial aid or admission to a college and then you need to wait to hear back, and this is a process that they will be doing many times over. She explained that students do not understand this concept and get frustrated when they miss deadlines or do not get an immediate response. She emphasized that they need to be taught this process so they are more successful and are not discouraged.

She also conducts a workshop on "establishing a contact at the university." She explained that many of the students she works with have never been on a campus or spoken with someone at a four-year college and they are intimidated by this process. She exposes them to going on the Internet and taking a virtual tour, and she then guides them through the process of speaking with college representatives or calling the department to which they may be interested in transferring. She reported that these kinds of skills that may be more commonplace in other colleges are not for many of her students. These experiences are new to many students and these workshops bridge the gap for them to be successful at the process of transferring.

### **3c. Communication and Collaboration Among Individuals Who Run Programs and Services That Promote and Support Transfer**

Collaboration is a key element in the support of the transfer function. Echoed in many interviews was that LASC has such a diverse population that there is no “one size fits all” at their campus. The counselors and administrators emphasized listening to their students and finding out “where they were at” and starting from where the student may be. Some students have never visited a counselor in high school or taken the SATs or may not have graduated from high school, so coming to college is a big leap and potentially a very uncomfortable situation.

Many interviewees said “I’ll walk them where they need to go.” This statement embodied that they want to ensure that students get what they need, even if it is just getting from office to office. We heard many of the interviewees say, “I will walk students to Financial Aid or to EOPS and make sure they get there and get the information they need.” The importance of caring about a student is evident and that they want students to succeed in even the smallest instance.

Another major sentiment is that collaboration is a symbiotic relationship between different entities at the college and results in being better able to support students. There is recognition that each program or person has a skill set that may match differently to students and therefore they work together to best meet the students’ needs.

Administrators, counselors and staff emphasized the importance of monthly departmental meetings where they received information from the CRT on their activities or changes to requirements from the four-year schools. They also mentioned transfer information that is sent via flyers and emails as useful to keeping abreast of the CRT activities.

## **4. SERVICES AND PROGRAMS SUPPORTING TRANSFER**

### **4a. Role and Scope of Counseling, Transfer Center and Other Transfer Support Services**

“The counselors motivate you to keep on going... they motivate me to take the number of classes that I can handle... on my pace.”

– *LASC Student*

The Counseling Office has five full-time counselors that service the general student population. The CRT has two full-time and two part-time counselors, EOPS has two full-time and one part-time counselor, CalWORKS has two full-time counselors, Matriculation and DSPS each have one full-time counselor and the Articulation Officer is also a counselor. All of these offices seem to work in tandem with each other as they can all do transfer counseling and refer students to the CRT for more in-depth information on transfer. Students in the focus groups, who were mainly participants in CRT and EOPS, rated the counseling in these offices of high importance in terms of transfer services provided.

### **4b. Scope, Quality and Use of Articulation Agreements**

The Articulation Officer stated that all counselors use ASSIST regularly and they are very familiar with the website. ASSIST has been a key element in having articulation agreements easily available and accessed by counselors and students.

### **4c. Financial Aid Scholarship Information**

The Financial Aid Office approximates that 80% of their student population receive Board of Governor’s (BOG) fee waivers as many students who come to LASC are on welfare. Many of the recipients of BOG fee waivers also receive some other type of financial aid.

The Financial Aid Manager identified that one of the main issues they face is that they see many students who cannot qualify for financial aid because they have over 90 units of coursework. Given

this, Financial Aid tries to monitor students' cumulative units so they can continue to receive their aid. They use a system that alerts the student that they are in risk of losing their financial aid and advises students to see a counselor.

The Financial Aid office uses computers in their office to help students complete the application on-line. They also conduct financial aid workshops in classrooms and they conduct presentations at community-based organizations. One of their big presentations is "Cash for College" where 20 different high schools have come to learn about financial aid. They also have a "Financial Aid Awareness Day" for everyone at LASC.

The Financial Aid Office works closely with all of the student services offices where they refer students who qualify for EOPS, CalWORKS, TANF and CRT. Throughout many of the interviews, we heard how important it was to educate students on the opportunities available to them and to help them understand the application and processes involved with financial aid.

One avenue that the Financial Aid Office utilizes with the four-year institutions is Consortium Agreements that have been established with certain schools. For example, a student at CSU Dominguez Hills can take a class at LASC and if the class is transferable, Dominguez Hills pays for the class. Other information on scholarship information from the four-year institutions is provided by the CRT.

#### **4d. Special Services and Programs Supporting Transfer, Including Academic Support Services**

**Faculty Involvement:** Throughout the interviews we heard that there were faculty and part-time instructors who supported transfer efforts in their classrooms. The CRT counselors mentioned that without the faculty allowing them to come into their classrooms, they would not be able to reach as many students as they do.

**Basic Skills:** The President as well as counselors reported that the majority of their student population enters LASC testing at the lowest levels of developmental education. This has a major impact on their ability to transfer.

"We also deal with another issue here that is significant, 99% of our students take one developmental Math course, 94% take a developmental English course and I would venture to guess 88-90% take two of each, so we have a huge population that needs developmental education....you're talking about a population who is not at entry transfer ready but our intent is to get them transfer ready if that is their goal and so we work towards that. We restructured basic skills about 12 months ago. We tried to build a continuum for students who come through. We augment that with counseling and different types of support...so they are moving on to the college-level class... what we talk about in the community is this is a pathway, a pathway to transfer."

– LASC President

**Tutoring Services:** Learning Assistance Center (Tutoring) is an important service to have on the campus. We heard in the student focus groups that tutoring is so important for them to be successful in their classes, especially math. The CRT counselors also stated that they refer many students to the Learning Assistance Center to help students with their personal statements for their college applications.

**Personal Development Classes:** Students and counselors referred to these courses as another resource that supports transfer for students. In these courses students are able to develop their educational plans, learn about careers and majors, and explore how to be successful as a college student.

**Scheduling of Classes:** Several administrators spoke about the importance of keeping transfer courses in the class schedule offerings. For example, if a student needs a higher level math or science class but these classes do not have a high enough enrollment, the administrators will make an effort to keep these courses open so that students who need these courses to transfer will be able to take them.

## 5. TRANSFER OF SPECIAL STUDENT POPULATIONS

**EOPS:** Many of the students at LASC whom we spoke with were enrolled in both EOPS and the CRT and there seems to be a strong relationship between these programs. As both are Specially Funded Programs (SFP), they seem to have a large financial base and are providing many services for students. EOPS, like CRT, has two full-time counselors. Additionally, their purposes seem to be similar and they mutually benefit students who are trying to transfer.

**Athletics:** Counselors and administrators also discussed athletes as a special population that contributes to their transfer rate. The football, basketball, track and field programs transfer many students who are recruited by four-year institutions. Currently the President estimated they have about 115 athletes in these programs and last year they transferred 12 to 13 football players and will probably transfer about six to seven basketball players later this year. These athletes need to take 12 units and most receive their AA degree and transfer. This group also benefits from counseling and tutoring as they need to keep up their GPA and coursework to maintain their eligibility to play in their sport and be recruited.

## 6. TRANSFER CONNECTIONS

### 6a. High School Connection

**Middle College:** LASC has a Middle College on their campus and this makes for a close connection to the high school students who are enrolled in this school. The Middle College students participate in college classes and the President will make presentations to the students. The Middle College counselors work closely with one of the LASC counselors to collaborate on college information. The CRT provides information on IGETC requirements, college applications and scholarship information to these high school students. These students also use the CRT and the information in the center, including EUREKA, a software product designed for career exploration.

**Talent Search:** Talent Search is another TRIO-funded program that serves 600 students at five target schools – three middle schools and two high schools. They outreach mainly to students of low income and whose parents have never attended college. They also provide services for students who need their GED or to pass the CASHEE. Talent Search brings their students onto the LASC campus to utilize the CRT for workshops and transfer information. Although the program is helping students go to four-year universities, many of the Talent Search students will also enroll at LASC.

There is a strong connection of high school students in both the Middle College and Talent Search to LASC. Although both of these programs emphasize applying to a four-year institution, if a student chooses to go to a community college and transfer later, LASC is a viable option with which they are already familiar.

### 6b. BA Connection

There is a strong relationship with CSU Dominguez Hills. Even the President stated that “the population at Dominguez Hills mirror us (LASC) very well....their foundation is similar and they have students who are like us.” Several counselors spoke about the strong ties to Dominguez Hills.

“We have a strong relationship with Dominguez... because of the relationship we’ve formed our students are welcomed with open arms.”

– *LASC Counselor*

“The warm and friendly atmosphere is what students love about Southwest and it’s like that at Dominguez.”

– *LASC Counselor*

Another connection with four-year institutions is that the Honors program participates in a Transfer Alliance Program (TAP).

The CRT Coordinator and counselors highlighted their college fairs and representatives that come to their campus. CSU Dominguez Hills and CSU Los Angeles have brought their staff to LASC and conducted on-site admissions. Campus personnel also conduct college tours to nearby CSU campuses, USC and UCLA and the Claremont Colleges.

## 7. BUILDING CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

**Capacity Building:** In response to the question of how and where they would invest additional transfer funds, many mentioned having more college campus visits, hiring more counselors, providing more grants for students to purchase books, providing more tutors, and providing more information for students online.

**Key Findings:** The findings suggest that LASC’s personal approach that identifies the needs of their community plays a key role in explaining the college’s higher-than-expected transfer rate. The following list identifies variables that contribute to create and sustain this culture:

- Basic Skills as a starting point for transfer
- Utilization of Special Programs (EOPS, Middle College High School, Talent Search) to reinforce the message of transfer
- Providing not only academic support but also personal support (workshops and clubs that work with students on the transition to college life as well as dealing with additional personal challenges)
- Complementary and reinforced messages to students from various offices and programs
- Closeness to Cal State Dominguez Hills and capitalizing on the relationship that has developed with this college
- Athletes as a particular group who have transfer goals

## Appendix 1: Los Angeles Southwest College Study Participants

<b>Los Angeles Southwest Study Participants</b>	
<b>Interviewee Position</b>	<b>Comment</b>
College President	Interim since July 2006
Transfer Center Coordinator	The Transfer Center is referred to as CRT (Center for Retention and Transfer funded by a TRIO grant)
Transfer Center Counselor	Also the Middle College (High School Counselor) and Honors Counselor
Transfer Center Counselor	Also Director of CAHSEE (California High School Exit Exam) Program
Transfer Center Counselor	
High School Counselor	Counselor at the Middle College high school (on the campus of LA SW)
Talent Search Coordinator	
High School Outreach	Outreach Coordinator – not limited to high schools but also, community-based organizations and church/faith groups
Articulation Officer	
Financial Aid Director	
Vice President of Student Services	Since a recent re-organization in 2007 of administrators all VPs and most Deans have academic (instructional) and service departments/programs reporting to them
Vice President of Academic Affairs	Since a recent re-organization in 2007 of administrators all VPs and Deans have academic (instructional) and service departments/programs reporting to them
Dean of Student Services	Responsible for TRIO programs: Center for Retention and Transfer, Upward Bound, and Talent Search
Dean of Counseling	Prior to this year, was the Dean of Student Services. The CRT reports to her and she manages the CRT budget
Institutional Researcher	Current title is the Dean of Academic Affairs - the Research Office reports to him as well as other academic and instructional programs. (Previously the Dean of Institutional Research and Planning)
Academic Senate President	
<b>Total # of Interviewees</b>	<b>16</b>

<b>Focus Group Participants</b>	<b># of Participants</b>
High School Counselors	5
Students participating in support programs	12 students total: 2 groups: 5 student participants & 7 student participants
<b>Total # of Focus Group Participants</b>	<b>17</b>

<b>Total # of Informants</b>	<b>33</b>
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## **Appendix 2: Documents Reviewed for Los Angeles Southwest College Case Study Analysis**

- College Self-Study (2006)
- Progress Report on Accreditation Recommendations (2008)
- Unit Plan Data
- College's organizational chart
- College Website
- CRT (Center for Retention and Transfer) brochure and services provided
- CRT Transfer Guide
- CRT Budget 2007-2008
- CRT Survey form
- Informational flyers distributed by CRT to students (calendar, workshops, clubs, campus fairs, campus representative visits and campus tours/field trips)
- Examples of Articulation agreements and ASSIST brochure

### Appendix 3: Los Angeles Southwest College Descriptors

<b>Descriptors</b>		<b>Comment</b>
<b>History and location</b>		
Year founded	1967	
Address	1600 West Imperial Highway Los Angeles, CA 90047	
District	Los Angeles Community College District	
Other colleges in district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Los Angeles City College</li> <li>• Los Angeles Harbor College</li> <li>• East Los Angeles College</li> <li>• Los Angeles Mission College</li> <li>• Pierce College</li> <li>• Los Angeles Trade-Technical College</li> <li>• Los Angeles Valley College</li> <li>• West Los Angeles College</li> </ul>	
Distance to nearest community college	7 miles – West Los Angeles College	
Distance to nearest four-year colleges	6 miles – Cal State University Dominguez Hills 13 miles – UCLA	
<b>Students &amp; Faculty</b>		
Average Student Enrollment 2005-2007 (Fall Semester)	6,811	
% Students Receiving Some Financial Aid	90%	
% Students Receiving Federal Grants	23%	
Counseling FTE (Full Time Equivalent), including categorical counselors	9	
Counseling FTE (Full Time Equivalent), excluding categorical counselors	5.5	
BA indicator	11% of residents in Los Angeles County have a BA	

## Appendix 4: Los Angeles Southwest College Transfer Indicators

Los Angeles Southwest College Cohorts	Residual (Actual-Expected Transfer Rate)	Actual Transfer Rate	Cohort Size
1998-99 Cohort	7.7895	36.69	507
1999-00 Cohort	4.6457	31.75	422
2000-01 Cohort	9.5554	35.87	460

Source: Transfer Rate Study of the CCCs, 2005-06 at <http://www.cccco.edu>

All seven colleges selected for the study showed consistently higher-than-expected transfer rates (a relatively large, positive residual) in the 2005-06 transfer rate study conducted by the Chancellor's Office. Cohorts of first-time college freshmen who completed a minimum of 12 units of community college coursework and who attempted a transfer-level Math or English course at some point during their enrollment were followed for six years from the time of their initial enrollment to determine the number and proportion transferring within that timeframe. As indicated previously, the "expected" rates factor in the percent of students who are age 25 or older and the bachelor plus index of the region.

Subsequent editions of Transfer Rate Study will include more recent cohort years and drop the oldest cohorts. Beyond adding more recent cohorts, future editions will reflect some changes in the underlying data which will affect transfer rates. Most differences will not be marked (a transfer rate of 58.05 might be recalculated as 58.15, for example), but in a few cases differences may be more significant. The ARCC report, which uses the same transfer rate data, cites three primary reasons for these changes, as follows:

**“Why are the rates for some of the indicators for the same cohort different in the 2008 [ARCC] report when we compare them to the 2007 [ARCC] report?”**

The changes could occur in a college's denominator, the college's numerator, or both. The changes in the data relate to the following factors:

- 1) The course cleanup project (Curriculum Reporting for the Community Colleges, CRCC): The course changes can and did alter the student headcounts in the cohorts, as well as their outcomes.
- 2) Student Identifier (SI) updates: With the announcement of the SB00 cleanup project for 2007-08, more districts started to submit SI updates to get a head start on the project.
- 3) Improvements in the methodology for extracting the cohort for the NSC match: With the 2008 report, we began to request all records from students, as opposed to restricting by date. This change resulted in identifying fewer students as first time.”

Source: [www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/TRIS/research/ARCC/ab1417\\_faq.doc](http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/TRIS/research/ARCC/ab1417_faq.doc)

**Appendix 5: Los Angeles Southwest College's Agreements with Four-Year Colleges and Representative Visits**

<b>Guaranteed Admission Agreements (major)</b>	<b>Articulation Agreements (major)</b>	<b>College/University Representative Visits (2007-2008)</b>
UCLA	CSU Dominguez Hills	CSU Dominguez Hills
	CSU Long Beach	CSU Long Beach
	CSU Los Angeles	CSU Los Angeles
	CSU San Bernardino	UCLA
	CSU Northridge	
	CSU Polytechnic, Pomona	
	CSU Polytechnic, San Luis Obispo	
	UCLA	University of Phoenix
	UC Irvine	
	UC Santa Barbara	
	Humboldt State University	
	San Diego State University	
	San Jose State University	
	USC	
	Loyola Marymount	