Student Affairs offers a variety of support services and programs aimed at improving the success of Lehman students. Implementing assessment strategies to examine the objectives and goals of our services and programs provides a useful analysis of their effectiveness, and shows us whether our desired outcomes have indeed been achieved.

To that end, the Student Affairs Assessment Council has been launched and is working to guide and develop the Division’s assessment efforts.

“We live in a data-driven world,” says Student Affairs Vice President Jose Magdaleno. “Measurement tools are available, and we have placed great emphasis on using assessment data to shape our strategic goals and objectives.”

Members of the Council invited Laurie Beck, CUNY Student Affairs Special Projects Associate, to lead a discussion on planning assessment projects.

Student Affairs staffers attended Council-hosted workshops on assessment practices and working collaboratively on assessment projects.

With support from Lehman’s Office of Assessment and Planning, the Council is developing templates for Divisional assessment plans. The templates are designed to ensure a consistent and uniform reporting structure.

The Council wants to create a culture of “meaningful assessment” that will serve to inform Student Affairs practices and to positively influence student outcomes.

“Students are typically involved with many of our offices,” says Magdaleno. “This provides it a rich environment for collaborative assessment initiatives. We expect to learn a lot from the data.”

Upcoming assessment activities: a roundtable discussion series, website, and poster presentation. See the following pages for more on Student Affairs assessment efforts.
Enhancing Awareness Through Transfer Student Orientation

By Amanda J. Dubois
Director, Community Engagement & New Student Programs

During focus groups for the Foundations of Excellence (FOE) study at Lehman, transfer students expressed “feeling lost” when they arrived on campus and “didn’t know where to go for help.” They cited the challenge of being “bounced around” from department to department.

At the start of the Fall and Spring semesters, the Office of Community Engagement & New Student Programs conducts a New Transfer Student Orientation. Typically, 300-500 students attend.

In response to feedback from the FOE focus groups, our Office set out to assess whether Orientation enables new transfer students to identify, locate and describe the resources available to them on campus. We sent a survey to all transfer students invited to attend the Spring 2014 orientation.

We asked them if they had attended the Orientation and compared the responses of those who had attended and those who had not. Of the responses we received, 81% of the students had attended Orientation. Among those students, 85% reported that Orientation (a) provided them with information on campus resources and (b) enabled them to identify and locate at least two departments and their services.

The data also indicate that many students sought additional activities to help them connect with their peers. To that end, our Office will strive to implement more opportunities for interaction into each session in the Orientation program.

We plan to create smaller Orientations and one large Welcome Week event. As those changes are made, we will continue to assess the new format to enhance transfer students’ awareness of the many student support services available to them at Lehman.

New Workshops Better Prepare Students for Job Interviews

Being interviewed by a prospective employer is an anxiety-producing event for most people. To better serve Lehman students preparing themselves for job interviews, the Career Services Center conducted an assessment of its Interview Techniques workshop.

Based on that assessment, the Center replaced the workshop the following year with two new ones: Steps to Preparing for the Interview and Ace Your Next Interview: Answering Behavioral and Traditional Questions.

To assess and evaluate students’ interview skills, Center staff members used the Mock Interview Clinic Program. The objectives measured were:

• Does the student understand the interview process, the importance of professional attire, and guidelines for follow-up?

• Is the student prepared for the interview in terms of having knowledge of (a) the position, (b) the company, and (c) the industry for which she or he is being interviewed?

• Are students familiar with traditional and behavioral interview questions?

The assessment process includes:

• A one-on-one formal interview with a professional interviewer.

• An evaluation of the student’s resume, appearance, poise, skill presentation, delivery and language.

• Constructive feedback from the interviewer.

• A debriefing session with the student and career counselor.

For the assessment, 27 interviewers represented academic, student support, and administration areas of the College, and 31 Lehman students participated in one of eight mock sessions.

The Center reported that the two new workshops had an immediate positive impact. Students earned above-average scores and there was improvement from academic year 2011-12 to 2012-13.

Based on the mock interview rubric, students were assessed in five categories, on a score of 1-5, for a possible total of 25 points.

Scores ranged from 10 to 25. Twenty-seven students scored between 18 and 25 for the academic year 2012–13 as compared to 12 students in 2011–12.

Students were also asked to rate themselves on their level of preparedness for an actual interview. Center analysis shows that students who participated in the two new interview workshops were better prepared for a job interview than students from the previous year who took one workshop.
New Counseling and Health Research Collective at Work

By Dugeidy Ortiz, M.A.

The Counseling and Health Research Collective (CHRC) is a new team of students, staff and professors at work on projects that seek to understand the first-generation student experience. Our objective is to integrate our findings into the development and implementation of effective, relevant, targeted, culturally appropriate, and socially just programming, practice, and service.

Studies will take place in the context of Lehman departments, the campus community and beyond. We view health as a multifaceted construct embedded within larger social, structural and environmental factors. These factors influence our students—and our community’s—quality of life and health outcomes.

We use evidence-based practices through a participatory action research (PAR) framework, a collaborative approach that enables students to play a central role as co-researchers. They help create a process through which we can better conceptualize and identify student strengths, challenges and barriers.

We’re looking at multiple lines of study and plan to conduct the following:

- The American College Health Association National College Health Assessment of student health status and needs to better inform our programming.
- A needs-and-assets assessment of new mothers and expectant students to increase retention among this at-risk population.
- A study of the impact on college achievement of Latina students’ familial experience.
- A collaborative study funded by NIMH to implement and test its Healthy Body Image screening and education tools.
- A study of the multidimensionality of identity and its intersections with race, gender, social class and sexual orientation among students.
Counseling Center asks: ‘How can we help you...better?’

By Valerie Baker, PhD
Training Coordinator

The Lehman College Counseling Center uses assessment to inform its work with students in clinical, programmatic, and training areas.

Intake covers multiple points of mental health assessment, and students who present any level of risk are seen immediately and receive services until the risk is resolved.

Other intake data guide program planning, such as students’ interest in specific groups and workshops. Walk-in sessions are bracketed by a before-and-after assessment of the self-reported level of distress on a scale from 1-10. Group attendees rate their stress level before and after sessions and comment on what accounted for any change.

Interns’ feedback and observations from their supervisors and treatment team serve to fine-tune the training program. One tool in particular, the Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ), illustrates the Center’s current assessment approach.

The SSQ is a 10-item survey that students may complete anonymously online or on paper. It answers the key quality assurance questions: How do students experience our services? What are we doing well? What can we do better?

The SSQ identifies outreach efforts that were most successful, which services attracted the most students, and how well the Center meets their appointment needs in terms of available times and number of visits. It gauges interest in groups and workshops that are currently offered or may be developed.

The SSQ also helps to evaluate the student experience with the counseling process. Students rate, on a Likert scale from 1 (= absolutely not!) to 5 (= absolutely!), how safe they felt and how well they felt the counselor understood their concerns. They rate on the scale from 1 (= did not help) to 5 (= it made a significant difference), if counseling helped them to deal with their problems, improve their personal life, stay in school, and perform better academically.

Students are asked if they would return to the Center as needed and if they would recommend the Center’s services to a friend. Finally, they have an opportunity to provide open-ended responses.

SSQ data inform all of the Counseling Center’s efforts and activities. In conjunction with other assessment methods, the data also enable staff to meet the evolving needs of Lehman students.

Urban Male Program Aims for Higher Graduation Rates

Graduation rates for black and Latino males persistently lag behind those of their white counterparts in four-year colleges and universities. The 2012 Schott Foundation for Public Education report, The Urgency of Now, cited New York State’s “lowest graduation rates” of 37% for black and Latino males compared to the 78% graduation rate for white males.

To help close this gap, the Urban Male Leadership Program (UMLP) helps facilitate the successful transition of first-year and transfer students. The program provides support to continuing students by strengthening academic skills, personal development, and character enrichment.

The UMLP focuses on three major components: Academic Intervention and Success, Circle of Support Mentorship, and Pipeline Diversity Outreach and Recruitment.

Retention-related services include tutoring and academic support, strategic partnerships with other departments on campus, referrals to academic and non-academic departments, review sessions and study groups, and assistance with course registration and academic appeals.

As part of a larger effort to measure its effectiveness, the UMLP has been working with the Office of Assessment and Planning and the Office of Institutional Research to measure the graduation rate of its participants, starting with the 2006 cohort.

Some data is already available, however. And it shows that, to date, students who joined the UMLP—and who also graduated within 5 to 7 years—outperformed their Lehman counterparts who were not in the program.

In the future, data for multiple cohorts will make feasible a more rigorous statistical analysis.
The Office of Campus Life has found social media to be an effective tool for reaching students, particularly Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Starting this Fall, surveys will be given to students at various locations on campus to assess which is the most used social media platform in the campus community.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being I don’t use this website and/or app, and 5 being I use this website and/or app actively, please rank your use of the following social media platforms.

- Facebook: 1 2 3 4 5
- Twitter: 1 2 3 4 5
- Instagram: 1 2 3 4 5
- Pinterest: 1 2 3 4 5
- Tumblr: 1 2 3 4 5
- YouTube: 1 2 3 4 5
- Google+: 1 2 3 4 5
- Four Square: 1 2 3 4 5
- LinkedIn: 1 2 3 4 5
- Reddit: 1 2 3 4 5

This information will be shared across the College. Data collected will inform the use of social media to promote activities, workshops and opportunities to build a greater sense of community and engagement among Lehman students.

Campus Life to Survey Students on Social Media Preferences

Lehman Child Care Center Executive Director Dawn Barton and Bianca Gloss, a teacher at the Center, were part of a CUNY team that made a presentation on assessment at the National Coalition for Campus Child Care annual conference in Portland, Oregon.

The CUNY team reported findings from the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) project, a collaboration with the Center for Children’s Initiatives (CCI), a New York City resource and referral organization. The Lehman Child Care Center is one of eight CUNY centers in the project, now in its second year.

The purpose of the DECA program is to promote young children’s social emotional development and foster their resiliency. This involves pre- and post-assessments that measure three main areas of children’s social emotional well-being: initiative, self-regulation and attachment/relationships.

Teachers and families work together on the assessments, which help to identify each child’s strengths, typical behaviors and any areas in need of support-related to resiliency.

Through the CCI, CUNY child care centers are each assigned a mentor who provides teachers with hands-on classroom activities, lessons and resources for the class and for individual children. CCI also provides ongoing training and support for teachers.

At the conference, teachers described their involvement in the DECA project as “beneficial on many levels.” They reported significant improvements with children in social emotional areas as well increased communication between teachers and families. They saw the outcome as “empowering” to young children—setting them on a path of continued success in school and in their their lives. “It’s been a win-win-win situation for the children, teachers and families involved,” says Barton.

Child Care Team Reports on Assessment Project at Conference