

TITLE V
EVALUATION
EXCERPTS



G R O U P i & i

Our evaluation reports are comprehensive, thorough, honest, and rigorous. In this document, we want you to see the components that are standard to every Group i&i evaluation, as well as excerpts from a previous Title V evaluation for your specific reference.

As our client, here is what you can expect in an evaluation report:

- I. Purpose of this Report:** A brief overview of what this report includes.
- II. Executive Summary:** A high-level overview of the project purpose and outcomes
- III. Methodology:** An overview of methodology used to assess progress towards stated goals
- IV. Acknowledgements:** Thanking individuals and organizations that helped with the project
- V. Assessment of Outcomes:** Goal-by-goal & outcome-by-outcome report of progress against pre-established performance indicators in the 3 areas signature to our evaluations:
 - Operational Effectiveness:** General operational issues identified and recommendations for enhancement
 - Output Measurement:** Detailed presentation regarding level of activity, with special attention to actual vs. desired outputs
 - Outcomes Assessment:** Analysis and discussion of how this project generated changes in specific goal areas, and to what facilitated these changes.
- VI. Postscript:** A concise summary of our findings, with recommendations for future areas of development that can further enhance your organization's impact
- VII. Appendices:** Varies by project. May include:
 - A. Additional data tables
 - B. List of partnering entities
 - C. Sources of evaluation data and methodology
 - D. Survey instruments
 - E. Status of previous recommendations (for returning clients)

The following are excerpts from a previous Title V evaluation. We hope the below content, specific to your interests, evidences our experience in this field as well as the rigor, detail and thought that goes into our client deliverables.

Our executive summaries concisely frame the project purpose and desired outcomes, achievements to date, practices, and data-informed suggestions for enhancement.

Purpose of this Report

This report measures progress of the TODAS campaign against its three goals and proposed outputs, submitted in the initial grant application and presented in the table below. The report provides an overview of activities completed by the Campaign towards increasing student persistence and retention. The presentation is organized in three main sections: review of operational effectiveness, output measurement, and outcomes assessment...

Goal 1. Develop a personalized support system to ease students' transition to college.

A1. Orientation to Self, College & Careers (Help set degree and career directions)

A2. Advising & Mentoring (Establish strong support networks)

OUTCOME:

Increased sense of comfort with the college setting, heightened commitment to college success, enhanced awareness of plans and careers, and strengthened sense of belonging

Goal 2. Enhance learning/learning assistance in developmental and introductory courses.

A3. Developmental-Content Course Pairings (Facilitate applied learning)

A4. Accelerated & Self-paced Basic Courses (Empower individualized learning)

A5. Expanded Specialized Tutoring (Plan academic intervention)

OUTCOME:

Improved student academic performance in EBS, D-MAT and select Introductory courses (withdrawals lowered and true-pass rates increased by 11.5 percentage points by Year 5)

Bridging Goal 3. Expand infrastructure for serving developmental students' needs.

A6. Training/Community Involvement (Engage campus community)

A7. Improved Resources for Students (Expand supportive facilities)

OUTCOME:

Reinforced full community commitment to developmental students' success

Executive Summary – Title V Recipient | Year 3

The TODAS Campaign is multi-faceted and a bit complex to manage. As anticipated, it straddles the divisions of academic affairs and student services; significant efforts continue at different levels to strengthen the connections between the two divisions. Recognizing the importance of building and sustaining these bridges, the College has appointed the two vice presidents overseeing these areas to co-direct the grant project.

Here is a snapshot of Year 3 activities, outputs, and outcomes:

Year 3 Activities & Outputs

In Year 3:

A new cohort of 329 students was enrolled in Fall 2012 to receive full services, including mentoring and enrollment in special sections of SUCCESS courses.

Within new cohort, 79% returned for a second semester and 58% enrolled at the College in Fall 2013. This is the second cohort of TODAS participants; its demographics are similar to those of Cohort 1 that started in Fall 2011, 59% of whom enrolled in Fall 2012 for a third consecutive semester.

Nineteen peer mentors were trained and engaged during Year 3, across SUCCESS sections, in providing valuable counseling and advice to their mentees.

Self-paced modules have been instituted in the computer hub across four developmental Mathematics courses, spanning 38 new course sections (at capacity, in similar fashion to Year 2), guided by trained instructors, with a total enrollment count of 832.

The number of tutoring hours tapped by TODAS students increased significantly in Year 2: by 40% at the Learning Center and by 20% for in-class tutoring

Beyond meeting projected outputs, the Campaign has generated positive outcomes:

Outputs Produced

Data show that served students have gained an improved outlook regarding personal success and the benefit of college; as they further appear to experience a smoother transition to college and greater engagement with faculty.

In college-level Mathematics courses, students who previously took their developmental coursework in a self-paced modality scored significantly higher grades than the rest. Furthermore, students in self-paced developmental MAT courses performed better than their counterparts and withdrew less frequently.

In English Basic Skills, the pass rates are noticeably better for the TODAS students than they were for former classes of students with similar academic readiness and needs.

Fall-to-consecutive-Spring retention of the primary participating cohorts has shown robust improvement when compared to a baseline or an untreated group of students; similar results are noted regarding a third-fall return. Of preliminary significance: mentored students returned at a higher rate than their non-mentored classmates.

Overall, there are mixed retention results and no solid positive or negative trend has emerged regarding Fall-to-Fall return or persistence for a fourth semester

Challenges Ahead. This progress is encouraging. However, a few concerns persist and ought to be considered and addressed reasonably soon; among them:

- 1 Mentors are serving students in their first semester well, but are losing contact with the students for the next two semesters during which there is a greater threat of attrition. Their role as peer advisors needs to be re-emphasized and formalized through a clearly-delineated action process.
- 2 No formal faculty advising has yet been instituted for academically-high-risk students served by this Campaign. This issue is critical and requires attention.
- 3 The concern remains that the core number of students enrolling in Year 4 is still lower than projected. While it is clear that many more students than the core group will be served (receiving mentoring and enrolling in special sections of SUCCESS), serious considerations should be given and strategies designed to increasing the size of the core group.
- 4 There appear to be better connections and collaborations in Year 3 between academic affairs and student services, but changes in leadership have for an extended period added confusion and ambiguity. Stability in the Campaign's managerial ranks moving forward is essential for its success.

On the question of whether the TODAS Campaign is making tangible progress toward meeting its stated objectives (Assessment for Goal is tabulated in Appendix A):

Progress towards Goal 1 (easing students' transition to college) is leaning positive, dampened by the issue of short-term mentoring and its limited scope.

- Progress towards Goal 2 (enhancing learning in developmental courses) appears positive and steady. Additional studies are needed to understand correlations between academic performance in developmental courses and sustained student retention across semesters.
- Progress towards Goal 3 (expanding infrastructure for serving developmental students' needs) is clearly well underway on many fronts. However, the College needs to pay vigilant attention to eliminating remaining silos and building lasting bridges among faculty and staff involved in enhancing student success.

Our team consists of associates with expertise spanning a wide range of evaluation methodologies—from the most sophisticated statistical analyses to rigorous survey design to advanced group facilitation and interview skills.

Methodology

Methods. Observations presented in this report are a synthesis of data and information gathered throughout Year 3 (and prior) of the grant by members of the Evaluation Team through a number of activities and from a variety of resources. These include:

- Two comprehensive student attitudinal surveys (Fall/Spring)
- Two peer mentor and tutor surveys (Fall/Spring)
- Short surveys of faculty involved with courses regarding student transition to college (Early Summer)
- Separate meetings with 12 mentors and 8 tutors (Spring)
- Multiple interviews of coordinators of EBS (who were also instructors in accelerated and paired EBS), D-MAT (who were also teachers in the computer hub), and IST; mentoring coordinator; director of Center for College Success; and other college executives (Fall and/or Spring)
- One focus group with students enrolled in D-MAT courses in computer hub (Spring)
- Meetings with management team and BCC executives (Fall and Spring)
- Observations at select meetings and activities (Summer, Fall and Spring)
- Review of materials, syllabi, promotional documents, meeting minutes where available, and comprehensive data sets (provided by the Center for Institutional Effectiveness, Learning Assistance Center, faculty coordinators, and staff)
- Analysis of T5 students' academic performance, compared to beneficiaries and others across a number of courses (study designed in collaboration with the Center for Institutional Effectiveness and commissioned by it) (Summer)
- Two focus groups with students [a total of 14 students attending]
- An attempt was made to conduct 10 in-depth interviews with selected participants (only one responded and was interviewed in spite of making incentives available).

At Group i&i, we not only look at your output data but also evaluate “the bigger picture” and provide an assessment on your organization’s operational processes and strategies, often linked to success.

Operational Assessment

TODAS appears to be gaining progressively-greater visibility at the College. Steady progress has been noted across a number of areas compared to the earlier two years. The number of incoming students and the scope of services available to them continue to grow. In Year 3, stakeholders reacted to the general operation of services and programs more positively than they previously had.

However, while individuals involved in the Campaign display a high level of commitment to its success, there were overall management and staffing issues of concern in Year 3 which were beyond their control...

Operational Recommendations

In reaction to what has been observed regarding operational progress, the Evaluation Team offers the following recommendations:

- Ensure stability of management staff for the duration of the grant.
- Re-convene the leadership team on a regular basis, keeping the two Co-Directors fully informed and engaged in key decisions; reassemble a larger group of constituents/contributors periodically.
- Establish an archival and communication system to keep the larger group informed about policies, procedures, planned strategies and overall performance.
- Host an annual working summit for staff and faculty, bringing together Student Services and Academic Affairs, to address “local” obstacles to student success.

- Engage decision-makers from the Registrar's and Financial Aid Office as allies to help develop and implement workable procedures for effectively implementing the TODAS coursework, and engage in broader conversations and joint planning on how to increase the retention and progress of developmental students.
- Finalize the standardization of the tracking procedure, ensure that it is consistent, and produce data reports for the College's leadership at least once every semester.
- Start exploring which strategies and activities will be institutionalized and at what level and to what extent for Year 6, post-grant-funding.

We use a variety of methods (i.e., graphs, tables, survey syntheses) to communicate results – our goal is to most succinctly and powerfully depict the data.

Output Measurement

The Campaign has to a great extent instituted many of the program components believed to enhance student persistence and success.

While certain activities may carry greater weight in terms of outcomes, their total *sum* was proposed as the intervening solution to raising students' academic performance, moving them steadily through college-level courses, and retaining them at higher rates for a fourth semester—one semester closer to graduation.

In this vein, an important element of the evaluation is to check whether and how far the Campaign met its output/process objectives: recruitment, training and engagement of participants, mentor and tutors; reform and expansion of academic coursework; building of a foundational infrastructure (computer hubs, e-retention tool, meeting space for mentors and mentees); training of staff and professional development around issues of student success for the rest of the campus. This is referred to as output

measurement. An analysis of progress achieved in implementing each of these activities and a close comparison between proposed and actual output levels for each activity follow (the table below lists the status—whether or not expectations set in the grant application have been met to date—for each category of activities).

Output Measurement – Actual versus Projections
Actual Student Enrollment: Met Expectations / Mixed Results
Mentoring Activity: Met Expectations / Mixed Results
SUCCESS Coursework: Exceeded Expectations
Advising Activity: Below Expectations
Self-Paced Dev MAT Coursework: Exceeded Expectations
Accelerated English: Exceeded Expectations
Paired English-Gen Ed Coursework: Below Expectations
Learning Assistance: Met Expectations
Campus Climate: Met Expectations / Mixed Results
Infrastructure: Met Expectations / Mixed Results

Mentoring Activity...

From the focus groups, mentors’ own statements echo these responsibilities; mentors interviewed affirmed their commitment to their mentees’ short- and long-term success.

Scenarios they shared with the Evaluation Team illustrated their level of understanding and creativity in staying connected with, and available to, their mentees. They come across as engaged, thoughtful, and willing to share their personal experiences to connect with their mentees. To a large extent, they understand the context of their work. As a group, they have developed a strong esprit de corps.

From their own perspective, participants interviewed and surveyed confirm their mentors' "significant support" and "dedication to their mentees' success."

Mentor Perceptions & Reactions (Findings from 2013 Interviews/Surveys)

Peer mentors stated they saw their roles including offering general counsel and support, motivation, providing referrals and resources, and "being there so mentees don't feel they're at it alone."

Most found their experience positive and added it was "interesting and fun." They characterized it as time-consuming and recognized it as "a good opportunity to learn about self and others."

Most mentors appear aware of their responsibility to stay in touch with their mentees and do regular check-ins, which they have done through email, text messaging, and lunches. They also saw it as their own responsibility to help build their own mentor support community. "Mentors are like family to each other and to mentees."

Among their challenges, they stated their inability to do much when their mentees faced financial obstacles. There was a common theme around their "untapped potential as creative helpers" in IST and their desire to do more as part of these courses and experiences.

Mentors insisted the experience helped them grow: develop personal confidence, compassion and patience; become less-centered; take a greater interest in the human story; and revisit their own career aspirations.

There remain, however, a few general concerns...

As was the case in the previous year, student-to-mentor ratio continues to rise, as the number of mentors engaged remains constant.

While the SUCCESS sections served a good "meeting space," for students and their mentors both intellectually and physically, mentors were unable to connect with former mentees nor did they stay attuned to their progress.

Mentors were not formally trained or involved as "academic interventionists." While they were helpful in assisting students who were not performing well in their classes through referrals to tutoring or assisting them with studying or planning their time better, they were not effectively involved as expected in reaching out to students in danger of dropping out.

Detailed analyses provide your organization with full access to the data and logic that informed all evaluation conclusions.

Outcomes Assessment

The TODAS activities have been implemented with the aims of facilitating students' transition to college, enhancing their academic persistence, and ensuring their success. In order to capture the extent to which these aims have been achieved to date, the Evaluation Team assessed a number of related measurable outcomes:

(1) changing student attitudes about self, college, and careers (across semesters); (2) return/retention rates (across semesters); and (3) academic performance (grades on developmental courses, among others). Where possible, these data have been analyzed according to certain student attributes.

The Year 2 evaluation effort included correlation studies to identify which activities (individually or combined) bore the greatest effect on retention and performance, to what extent and for which groups (by gender, ethnicity, etc.).

1. Student Attitudes & Perceptions.

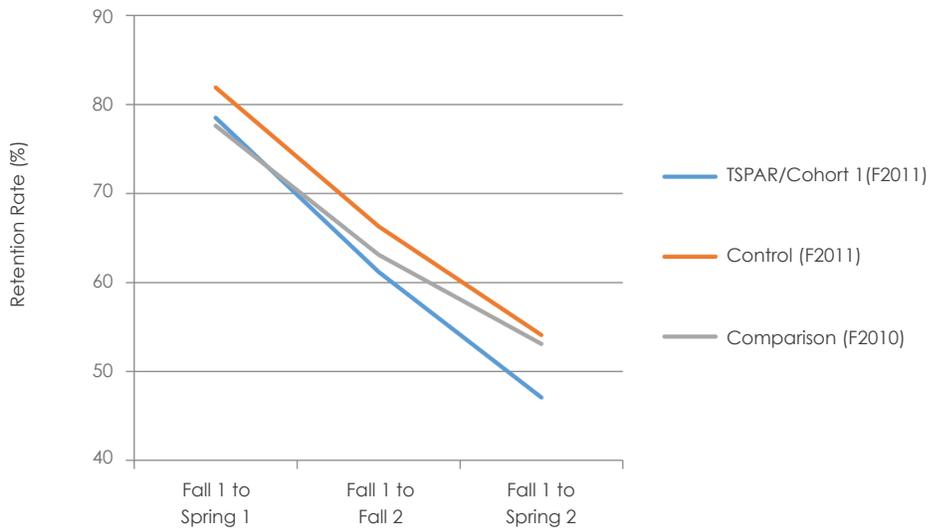
Analysis Model. A thorough analysis was conducted for each survey (per cohort and per semester) regarding attitudes and perceptions across six general subscales: (1) ability of college to improve future, (2) personal commitment to success, (3) perception toward campus, (4) engagement in campus activities, (5) access to faculty and use of other academic resources, and (6) overall transition to college. Student perceptions in each of these categories were assessed by combining responses to questions that belonged to these subscales (see table on next page for subscales and reliability indices from the Fall 2012 baseline survey). Changes in these perceptions, computed from average responses arranged in the above clusters, are sought to represent possibly emerging trends in each of the subscales as students' progress through their academic programs. Reliability of each of the subscales improved from previous implementations of the survey, indicating that items are clustering sufficiently with one another within the subscale.

Subscale	Grouped Statements of Beliefs/Behaviors
<p>[Ability of College to improve future]</p> <p>Strong grouping reliability for both surveys</p> <p>$\sigma = 0.88$</p> <p>(greater reliability compared to earlier surveys)</p>	<p>Seeing college as an opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To grow socially & intellectually • To achieve specific goals • To find a better career • For taking steps to direct future • To make more money • Or a means towards personal growth <p>Proud of being a college student</p>
<p>[Personal commitment to success]</p> <p>Strong grouping reliability for both surveys</p> <p>$\sigma = 0.80$</p> <p>(greater reliability compared to earlier surveys)</p>	<p>Considering self to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very confident in abilities to succeed at college • Dedicated to performing well at this college • Engaged/interested in classes so far • Committed to achieving academic goals • An active participant in classes <p>Expecting college more difficult than high school</p>
<p>[General perception toward campus]</p> <p>Good grouping reliability for both surveys</p> <p>$\sigma = 0.73$ (improved reliability)</p>	<p>Familiarity with the campus and its facilities</p> <p>Adjusting with ease to the College</p> <p>Feeling a sense of belonging at the College</p> <p>Finding the college staff generally helpful</p> <p>Finding Bergen staff & faculty welcoming so far</p>
<p>[Engagement in campus activities]</p> <p>Grouping reliability depending on survey</p> <p>$\sigma = 0.57$ (improved reliability)</p>	<p>Making new friends on campus</p> <p>Currently socializing with upper-class students</p> <p>Wanting to establish a support group with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellow classmates • Study groups • Friends • Upperclassmen <p>Joining recognized student groups on campus</p>
<p>[Access to faculty and use of academic resources]</p> <p>Grouping reliability depending on survey</p> <p>$\sigma = 0.78$</p> <p>(greater reliability compared to earlier surveys)</p>	<p>Meeting with peer mentor(s)</p> <p>Having been to the Learning Center</p> <p>Planning on spending any time outside class</p> <p>interacting with faculty for assistance</p> <p>Wanting to establish a support group with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer mentors • Faculty
<p>[Importance of preparation and involvement in class]</p> <p>$\sigma = 0.53$ (New subscale)</p>	<p>Familiarity with course syllabus</p> <p>Perceived importance of attending class and completing assignments</p> <p>Access and acquisition of important tools, from study guides to online assistance, etc.</p>
<p>[Overall transition to college]</p>	<p>Sense of comfort during transition</p>
<p>Reliability Indices presented are for the latest survey</p>	

2. Return and Retention Rates

Return rates were projected in the grant proposal across six semesters for each student cohort. Actual rates for the two cohorts of TSPAR and T5BENE students were made available through the Center for Institutional Effectiveness ...

Third-Fall Return (Fall-Fall-Fall)				
	Cohort 1 T5PAR	Cohort 1 T5BENE	Entering F2011 Untreated Group	Entering F2010 Baseline
Return Rate	45.2%	33.5%	43.7%	45.5%



Comparison of Retention Data for Cohort 1, against Comparison & Control Groups

While no undisputable retention trends were identified, additional observations around the issue of student return are worth listing:

- Cohort 1 fell slightly short of meeting its retention projections; Cohort 2 did better than what was projected from Fall to Spring, but slightly worse for Fall to Fall.
- From both cohorts, a lower percentage of African-American and Hispanic/Latino students returned after one or two semesters than their White counterparts.
- Attrition was high among certain T5PAR subgroups starting in Fall 2011 (Cohort 1). More than half did not return for a fourth semester from among Hispanic/Latina females (58.6%), African-American females (57.1%), White males (53.7%) and African-American males (52.9%). Closer scrutiny is necessary, which may suggest special attention and strategies.
- Within Cohort 1, White females achieved the highest fourth-semester retention among all other groups (67.7%), 50% higher than the control group entering in Fall 2011 as a whole. Similarly, within Cohort 2 (starting in Fall 2012), White females returned for a third semester in large numbers; but even their retention rates did not match that of their White counterparts who, at 76.9%, represented the highest rate of return for a third semester in a row (even compared to comparison or control groups overall).
- There generally appears to be a gently-sloped upward retention trend for all groups (TODAS-treated and untreated), which points to overall improvements in academic support services and programming at the College that may be having a positive cumulative effect.

We concisely qualify progress towards each of your project's goals and then add more detailed explanations and analyses.

Appendix A: Assessment by Goal – Additional Data & Tables

A1. A Snapshot of Progress Toward the TODAS Goals

Goal 1. Transition to College

- Mentoring: Positive / Need to engage more effectively in academic intervention
- IST: Positive / Need to assess effect of revised course + career practicum pair
- Advising: Formally missing / Needs instituting

Goal 2. Enhanced Learning & Learning Assistance

- Self-paced D-MAT: Positive
- Paired EBS: Positive / Needs expansion
- Accelerated EBS: Positive
- In-class and enhanced tutoring: Positive

Bridging Goal 3. Improved Coordination & Infrastructure for Student Success

- Mathematics Computer Hub: Positive
- Mentoring Wing: Positive
- e-Retention Tool: Needs implementation
- Professional Development: Positive
- Overall Coordination: Needs further improvement, especially in areas of communication, joint planning, and establishment of roles and responsibilities

Many of our clients involve us in evaluating multi-year projects. This allows our investment with you to be longitudinal – we're invested in your long term success!

Appendix B: Status of Year-2 Recommendations

Following is a review of recommendations made by the Evaluation Team in the October 2011 and January 2013 final annual reports, and status of these recommendations.

Communication, Collaboration & Oversight

- Improve communication from “the top down.” Work that remains in progress
- Enhance coordination across the various activities. Much improved
- Formalize TODAS coordinators' areas of focus and authority. Much improved
- Revisit/project cohort sizes and outputs for the next three years.
Not fully addressed
- Integrate EBS reform efforts more effectively with T5 Program. Slightly improved
- Clarify & broadly communicate imperative of student success. Not fully addressed
- Ensure TODAS information is easily accessible to incoming students. Done

Program Development

- Revisit the Summer Connections program. Done
- Educate mentors to focus on retention with their mentees. Not fully addressed
- Scale up effective components of the mentoring program. Not fully addressed
- Ensure IST instructors take on a serious advising role. Not fully addressed
- Improve tracking of professional development workshop attendance. Not known
- Enhance computerized tracking of Computer Annex use. Much improved



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