Are You a HIPster?

**What is HIP?** Community colleges nationally have developed creative and data-driven initiatives that have proven effective in enhancing college-wide key performance indicators for underserved and underprepared students. The Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) has worked with community colleges to identify a handful of promising high-impact educational practices (**HIP**). Palo Alto College has identified the following high impact education practices (HIPs) as those that can best serve our students by improving student persistence, retention, productive grade rate, graduation rates, and reducing the amount of time students spend lingering in developmental education. PAC’s HIPs are:

1. Required Tutoring
2. New Student Orientation (NSO)
3. New Student Convocation (NSC)
4. Learning Communities
5. Peer Advising
6. Problem-based Learning (PBL)

**Why is it beneficial for students to participate in each High Impact Practice (HIP)?**

Required Tutoring: Starting this fall, MATH 0301 and 0302 students in 16-week, face-to-face courses will be required to attend tutoring for one hour per week. Specifically, 0301 students will come to the lab with their instructors, while 0302 students will sign up to attend tutoring during specific times.

Required Tutoring benefits students: Institutional data demonstrates for Fall 2012, tutored Math 0301 students had a 7% higher productive grade rates (PGR-grades of A, B, or C) and tutored Math 0302 students had 19% higher PGRs.

New Student Orientation (NSO): Includes an overview of resources, a campus tour, lunch, and academic advising assistance. Students are exposed to key services, like Financial Aid and Scholarship opportunities, enabling them to make well-informed choices and decisions. In addition, new students and their families are informed about educational pathways and the accompanying programmatic options.

NSO benefits students by:

* Increasing retention rates. The J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College has found that students experience higher Mean Grade Point Average and retention rates after participating in the Student Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR) Program (Hollins, 2009).
* Providing students an opportunity to develop a rapport with faculty and academic advisors during advising sessions and understand course expectations through conversations with faculty.

HIPster Factoids:

* During the Summer 2012 NSO sessions, out of the 1,380 students who RSVPd to attend a New Student Orientation, 1,217 registered for courses.
* 13 NSOs were conducted throughout the Summer of 2013 with attendance of 1240.
* 87 Staff members from across the college have assisted with NSO this Summer.
* 26 Faculty members have assisted with advising sessions this Summer.

New Student Convocation- This fall, PAC will host its inaugural New Student Convocation (NSC). All First Time in College (FTIC) students are invited to attend NSC. NSC plans to host 400 students and guests.

NSC benefits students by:

* Celebrating all new incoming students and the fact they have chosen PAC
* Motivating all new incoming students as they begin their higher education journey.
* Helping students understand and value being a part of the Palomino family.

Learning Communities- PAC formally launched Learning Communities (LCs) during the last academic year with two Puente Program Learning communities. In a Learning Community, cohorts of students are enrolled in two or more courses for a semester; these classes feature intentionally integrated course work developed by faculty. For Fall 2013, PAC has increased our learning communities to 19.

LCs benefit students by:

* Providing a peer support network. Because students are enrolled as a cohort in two or more courses, they bond more readily and have easier access to forming study groups.
* Accelerating students’ educational pathways. Because students in LC experience higher success rates, they spend less time in developmental education and complete college courses more quickly.
* Enhancing students’ critical thinking skills through an integrative learning experience.

Peer Advising-

Peer Advising is a new initiative beginning for the 2013-2014 academic year. The 27 Peer Advisors selected are students who have completed at least 31 hours and have a GPA of 2.75 or greater. All First Time in College Students will be assigned a dedicated Peer Advisor and will receive contact from that Peer every week through phone calls, emails, and face to face interaction at events.

Peer Advising benefits students by:

* Increasing student retention and graduation based on a similar program from Seneca College
* Serving as a point of contact to help answer student questions.
* Guiding students to academic advisor and appropriate resources.
* Providing support and encouragement to FTIC students.
* Peer Advisors develop mentoring skills

Problem-based Learning (PBL)

As illustrated by PAC’s QEP, PBL is an instructional strategy in which the instructor poses a challenging, interdisciplinary real world problem to students. Through this active learning based strategy, the students develop an understanding of course content while solving the given problem. Since Summer 2012, 27 faculty members across disciplines have attended a three day PBL Summer Institute and developed a PBL assignment to administer in his or her class.

PBL benefits students by:

* Enhancing their educational experience at PAC. CCSSE student survey data noted that students desired more active learning in the classroom rather than lecture-driven instruction.
* Improving student learning outcomes. During the 2012-2013 academic year, students who participated in PBL submitted end-of-semester reflection papers. In these reflections, students attested that they had enhanced their critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and personal responsibility skills through the completion of PBL activities.