Title of Project: **Pierce GROWs (Growing through Retention, Outreach, and Wrap-Around Services)**

College/District: Los Angeles Pierce College/Los Angeles Community College District

Submitted by: Mary Anne Gavarra-Oh, Dean of Academic Affairs and Sunday Salter, Transfer Center Director (Co-Chairs of Enrollment Management Committee)

Website: [http://piercecollege.edu/](http://piercecollege.edu/)

**FAST FACTS**

- Fall 2019 Headcount: 19,977
- Fall 2019 FTES: 5,958.34
- Fall 2018 FTEF: 675.4
- Location: Woodland Hills, CA
- Structure: Multi-college district

**Background**

By reviewing the data collected over the years, the college noticed a variety of enrollment trends related to roadblocks that keep Pierce students from enrolling from semester to semester. Through different avenues such as retention studies, contract with Ruffalo Noel Levitz regarding enrollment management marketing, and the Enrollment Barriers taskforce, the college found there was a need to improve the student experience at various stages in their enrollment cycle. The college found needs in the areas of retention, outreach and wrap-around services.

Through the Pierce GROWs project, the college received assistance with prioritization and implementation of the initial recommendations in the areas of retention, outreach and wrap-around services. These areas are emphasized in the revamped Pierce College Plan for Enrollment Management.

*SEM Academy Vision Statement: Through a Guided Pathways framework and a re-vamped outreach and recruitment strategy, LAPC will create California’s best-in-class onboarding program for new students showcasing effective wrap-around services that improve persistence rates during the first year.*

**Process and Procedures**

The SEM Team was comprised of leaders from a large cross-section of the college: Student Services, Admissions, Counseling, Outreach, Transfer Center, Guided Pathways, CTE, Academic Senate, Academic Affairs, Institutional Effectiveness and the Enrollment Management Committee. The SEM team met monthly and had various taskforces to implement the activities. The team also communicated the activities through the monthly Enrollment Management Committee meetings, Guided Pathways meetings, weekly college newsletter, and each team member reported out at their various committees. The SEM team also held a college-wide town hall regarding the project. Guided Pathways provided some funding for food for the town hall meeting, the SEM conference attendance and t-shirts for the entire college faculty and staff.
The team developed key activities during the SEM Academy kickoff meeting and throughout the year in order to complete the SEM project:

- Campus-wide Enrollment Conversation
- Guided Pathways Call-A-Thon I and II Collaboration
- Brahma Brag
- Pierce Proud
- Steps to Enroll
- Resource Guide
- Integrated Campus-wide Calendar
- Campus Tours

**Completed**

- **Campus-Wide Enrollment Conversations Session**: Over 100 faculty, staff and student leaders attended this session to discuss current enrollment & retention concerns. In this meeting partially facilitated by the SEM Academy Coaches, the conversation was robust and dynamic, with participants coming from a large cross section of campus, from custodial staff all the way up to the president. There were a lot of great ideas generated on the spot that the SEM group implemented such as Pierce Proud, Brahma Brag, Student Communications, Resource Guide and Steps to Enroll.

- **Guided Pathways Call-A-Thon I and II**: To address students who are not aware of their priority registration date, 20 faculty and staff members volunteered to call students who have completed 45-59 units to remind them to register. The goal was to increase Fall to Spring enrollment for these students by 5%. The activity resulted in an 18% increase resulting to $172,500 increase in apportionment.

- **Brahma Brag**: To address the staff and faculty concerns about program knowledge and resources for students, the Brahma Beat weekly newsletter from the president now features the Brahma Brag which spotlights a Pierce Student Service Office.

- **Pierce Proud**: To increase school spirit among faculty, staff and students, every Thursday, we all show our Pierce Proud by wearing Pierce shirts or colors.

- **Student Communications Taskforce**: The goal of the committee is to review and update the student letters/communications received from the SIS system to be more welcoming, student-friendly and helpful. The taskforce also developed recommended communication guidelines for the college to use.

- **Steps to Enroll**: The taskforce worked on modifying the student steps to registration and came up with revised and simplified steps to register. The taskforce reduced the steps to register from ten to seven.

- **Resource Guide**: The Guided Pathways Retention team took the lead on creating a unified campus office and resource information guide for students, faculty and staff.
In Progress

- **Integrated Campus-wide Calendar**: A campus-wide calendar to coordinate outreach events and activities was created to streamline activities. This project is still in progress with implementation.

- **Virtual Campus Tours**: Due to COVID-19 quarantine, the team revised our campus tour plan to contract with a local film company to create a virtual campus tour.

Outcomes and Effectiveness
We measured and will continue to measure the effectiveness of our Call-A-Thon activities and the level of engagement of our college faculty and staff.

Call-A-Thon Activities:
Our initial goal for the Call-A-Thon activity was to increase Fall to Spring enrollment for students who have completed 45-59 units by 5%. Our results exceeded our expectations and yielded an 18% increase in enrollment for that target group. This yielded an approximate additional apportionment of $172,500. Please see the attached Executive Summary for the full description of the program activity.

Campus Engagement
- Over 20 employees volunteered their time in the Call-A-Thon
- Over 100 faculty and staff members attended the Enrollment Conversations town hall session
- Over 300 employees have ordered t-shirts for the Pierce Proud Thursday events

The Pierce GROWs project was not designed with the intent of closing equity gaps at Pierce College. In the coming term, we plan to examine the data after Phase 2 of the Call-A-Thon project is complete.

Benefits
Students have benefited from the Pierce GROWs activities:

- One of the activities was to simplify the steps to register for courses. The ten step process was reduced to seven.

- The Communications Taskforce reviewed all auto-generated communications from our district and our college and simplified and updated these to reflect more student-friendly and clear language.

- The Brahma Brag activity and the Resource Guide increased faculty and staff awareness to programs and initiatives on campus that serve our students’ unique needs. As a result, faculty and staff are better equipped to assist students.

- The Pierce Proud activity will continue to boost morale by uniting all faculty and staff with a sense of pride in our college that will certainly have an impact on the student experience.

- The campus-wide calendar will create a more coordinated and organized recruitment effort allowing us to serve more students.
• Without an organized college tour system, students do not know how to access our college for the first time. Setting up a virtual campus tour system will make the initial experience of our students a positive one.

**Lessons Learned**
The SEM project team was made up of campus leaders from across the college. There were a variety of challenges and roadblocks such as time constraints, overcommitment of committee members, current budget deficit, initiative fatigue, duplication of efforts, and sustainability. Of course, the COVID 19 quarantine brought additional unforeseen challenges. Because of the quarantine, we were forced to pivot quickly to provide extra support to the students. In an effort to bring together the faculty and staff during this difficult time, we launched a “We Are Here For You” campaign in collaboration with the student and college leaders on campus. Over twenty students, faculty and staff submitted videos that are housed on the Pierce College YouTube site and webpage.

The team realized the value of time set aside and implement activities of this nature. In the future, we would benefit from additional meeting time. In addition, the team could also benefit from the addition of members who are eager to contribute and have more availability.

**Next Steps**
The Enrollment Management Committee will continue to implement most of the SEM activities in collaboration with the Guided Pathways Coordinators, Student Services and Academic Affairs.