

Pre-Collegiate Basic Skills Accountability Report

Part 3: Transitional Studies Department



Division of Institutional Advancement

March 2006

The following draft report presents the third segment of the Office of Research, Planning and Grants' Pre-Collegiate Basic Skills Accountability series, which evaluates the effectiveness of CCSF instruction and support services in the pre-collegiate basic skills areas. This report examines the Transitional Studies Department, from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, combining data drawn from CCSF systems as well as focus group interviews with Transitional Studies faculty members and student survey data. A report this complex combines the efforts of many individuals:

- All quantitative data was collected and analyzed by Pamela Mery, Researcher.
- Faculty focus groups were conducted by Robert Gabriner, Vice Chancellor of Institutional Advancement; Elisa Rassen, Special Projects Coordinator; and Pamela Mery.
- Student survey data and written perspectives were collected by Pamela Mery and Denise Quinn, ESL faculty member, with the assistance of classroom faculty. The written perspectives were analyzed by Susan Lopez, ESL faculty member, and Pamela Mery.
- The report was written by Pamela Mery and Elisa Rassen.

We would also like to acknowledge Transitional Studies department chair Jane Sneed for her assistance in editing for clarity and accuracy.

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

This report represents the third part of the Pre-Collegiate Basic Skills Accountability series evaluating the effectiveness of CCSF instruction and support services in the pre-collegiate basic skills areas. The first report focused on success rates for students in the pre-collegiate levels of credit mathematics, English, and English as a Second Language (ESL). The second report focused on the Retention/Success programs designed to assist students enrolled in credit courses and increase their success rates. This third report focuses on Transitional Studies, an important area of the College's noncredit program which serves students needing adult basic education and other pre-collegiate instruction.

This report incorporates qualitative data consisting of faculty views collected via focus groups.¹ This represents an enhancement over previous reports which did not incorporate a more personal perspective despite containing descriptive information. While it is desirable to also include students' views, efforts to obtain student views have not been successful due to a variety of constraints, principally the desire to avoid interference with class time, the financial limitations in offering incentives for students to participate in group activities outside the classroom, and lack of sufficient personnel to pursue students for individual interviews. The Division of Institutional Advancement continues to look for ways to include student viewpoints. With this purpose in mind, a survey was recently distributed in noncredit classes. Over 3,700 students responded, including 400 Transitional Studies students. Some data from this survey will be included in this report; full results from the survey will be made available shortly in a separate report.

The quantitative data presented in the report comes from the College's Banner database and is analyzed by the Division of Institutional Advancement staff, with the exception of Table A, which was generated in association with the Office of Instruction.

¹ In a few cases, individual interviews and comments written in response to focus group questions were used.

MAJOR DATA FINDINGS

Each year the Transitional Studies department serves approximately 3,300 to 4,900 students, many of whom could be described as “seeking a second chance.” A majority of students (63%) are under the age of 30 and nearly all (up to 92%) are students of color—most notably, 41% are Latino and 25% are African American. More than half each year (58% to 66%) are new to the department. Nearly one-third of these new TRST students come from noncredit ESL.

Students enroll at various campuses through the district, and each campus serves a somewhat different population. John Adams (JAD) has by far the largest program. However, enrollment at all locations, including JAD, decreased between 2003-04 and 2004-05. The largest drop was from 2002-03 to 2004-05—a 32% decrease in headcount.

Faculty at all campuses expressed strong commitment to helping students succeed academically and personally. In turn, students in general (94%) express feeling supported by noncredit faculty.

Until recently, nearly all TRST students were enrolled in multi-level courses with self-paced components (in 1998-99, 82% were multi-level, dropping to 71% by 2001-02 and finally dropping to 52% in 2004-05).

Results from the Noncredit Student Survey, while offering much positive feedback about TRST, also revealed a gap in student interest level in courses and the amount of information they receive about those courses. For example, 57% of TRST students have some interest in vocational classes, but only 23% indicated that they have received information about vocational classes. Regarding credit classes, 72% are interested in credit classes, but only 42% have received information about credit classes and services.

Each year as many as 300 students earn their GED after enrolling in TRST courses. For many, the time it takes to achieve GED completion is relatively short. Between 45% and 50% of TRST students completing a GED in the 2002-03 to 2004-05 academic years took only one semester of TRST courses—with most attending only 12 to 41 hours of instruction, roughly equivalent to 5.6 days of high school or less. Overall, 93% to 96% of completers took five semesters or fewer to earn a GED, attending considerably less time than an SFUSD student is required to attend to earn a high school diploma.

Of the 591 students who completed the GED in 2002-03 or 2003-04 after (or while) enrolling in TRST courses, 33% enrolled in credit courses during following year. The largest areas of enrollment are English, PE, Learning Assistance and mathematics—the same top four areas of enrollment for new, first-time credit students. The data suggests that in general—but not in all cases—TRST students do not perform quite as well in English and mathematics courses when compared to new, first-time credit students. Students at the lowest basic skills levels (English K and L, Math E) perform better than new, first-time credit students. Nonetheless, this data indicates that many students who obtain a GED are in fact *not* prepared to enroll in college-level courses and instead remain, and at times struggle, at the pre-collegiate level.

In examining TRST success from another angle, the data reveals that up to 10% of students who received a degree or certificate from 2002-2003 through 2004-2005 have been enrolled in the CCSF Transitional Studies program at some point since 1984.

A. Description of Transitional Studies Program Offerings

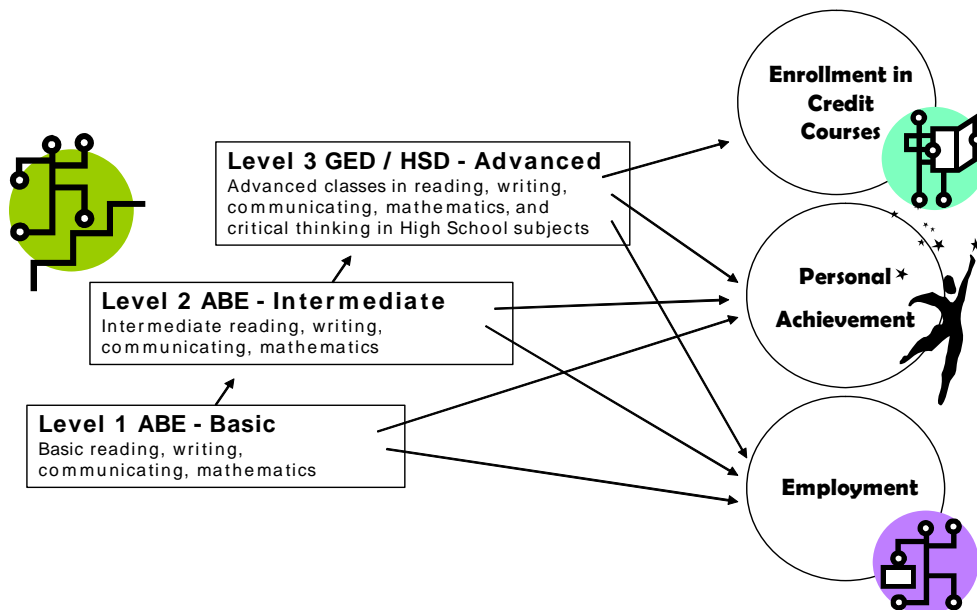
The CCSF Transitional Studies department offers a variety of programs serving students who have not had the chance to complete or advance their education, generally due to the lack of a high school degree. According to TRST faculty, these students “face perhaps the biggest academic and life challenges of any at CCSF.” This substantial student population included 28,455 individuals from academic years 1998-99 through 2004-05, who generated 79,342 Transitional Studies course enrollments² during that time.

Students enrolled in Transitional Studies courses have a variety of educational needs. To serve these needs, the Transitional Studies department provides ongoing instruction in Adult Basic Education, General Education Development, the CCSF High School Diploma Program, Pre-collegiate skills, and Vocational Foundation Skills. The department lists its program goals in the CCSF catalog as follows:

- Provide students with basic skills through Adult Basic Education (ABE) for living, employment, entry into job training programs, or further college study.
- Prepare students to pass the General Education Development (GED) exam.
- Provide a comprehensive program leading to the CCSF High School Diploma (HSD).

In previous years a majority of Transitional Studies courses were “multilevel” courses where students’ work was self-paced in individualized learning lab settings. More recently, the department has tried to separate skill levels into three areas, illustrated below in Graph 1.

GRAPH 1



² Generating at least one positive attendance hour each.

Upon enrolling in Transitional Studies (TRST), students are tested in reading and mathematics, and then placed at a level matching their ability and geared toward their educational objectives. All three TRST levels can lead to the fulfillment of employment goals or the achievement of personal goals; however, only Level 3 is intended to lead directly to credit education.

The three TRST course levels include the following components:

- **Level 1** courses in Adult Basic Education consist of beginning, basic instruction in reading, writing, communicating and mathematics.
- **Level 2** courses in Adult Basic Education consist of intermediate instruction in reading, writing, communicating and mathematics.
- **Level 3** comprises courses at the GED and CCSF high school diploma (HSD) level, advanced classes in reading, writing, communication, mathematics and specific high school subjects (e.g., literature & arts, science, social studies).

Many adults (age 18 and older) enter the Transitional Studies program at Level 1 or Level 2 to improve their basic academic skills. Their ultimate educational goals range from becoming literate to fulfilling job-related requirements to obtaining a GED. Many Level 3 students also have the goal of completing the GED for a variety of reasons, both work-related and personal. Certain employers, including the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), refer employees to TRST so they can complete their GED as a job requirement. Furthermore, some of the students taking Level 3 high school classes are current high school students; through a special arrangement with SFUSD, current high school students can enroll concurrently in Transitional Studies courses for credit towards their diploma.

In addition to the types of courses listed above, vocationally-oriented TRST courses prepare students for employment, entry into job training programs, or further college study. Often funded by CalWorks or through Contract Education grants, topics include foundation skills, job communication, literacy tutor training³, and graphic arts. Students in these courses are generally under significant pressure to find work as soon as possible.

For detailed course descriptions by level, see Appendix.

Transitional Studies offers practice GED testing at the Gough Street location, in addition to offering courses at a variety of skill levels. Individuals studying for the GED through TRST include: (1) students who come through the ABE courses at Levels 1 and 2, and continue their studies at Level 3; (2) GED-prep students who enroll in Level 3 courses; and (3) individuals who simply want to take the practice exam can do so through the course TRST 0038, Orientation to Academic Success.⁴ Each section of the practice test takes 45 minutes.

While some GED completers will continue on to get a high school diploma through Transitional Studies, many exit the program after reaching their GED-related goal. The Transitional Studies department is currently working on programs to encourage GED

³ The literacy tutor training is a collaboration with Project Read training for volunteer tutors.

⁴ There are also individuals who take the GED examination at the CCSF GED Testing Center

completers to continue their studies and complete the high school diploma, which requires more advanced mastery of skills and subject areas.

The Transitional Studies department also works with the African American Scholastic Program, a relationship worth noting, though it will not be explored in depth in this report. The African American Scholastic Program at the Ocean Campus uses TRST courses to serve African American high school students who need high school credits or would like a head start in their education. The program employs counselors from SFUSD to assist its students.

All courses offered by the Transitional Studies department are noncredit, meaning that students do not receive college credit for completing any TRST courses. As with noncredit courses in general, TRST courses are “open entry / open exit”, so a student may enter the program at any point during the semester. Classes that are part of the high school track, however, are closed to new students after the fourth week of instruction.

Table 1 shows the numbers of students enrolled in TRST courses during the last seven academic years, and their TRST course level.⁵ At its peak in 2002-03, the department served 4,881 students. More recently, figures have been somewhat lower at 3,317. Until recently, information pertaining to student skill level was scant, since most courses included students at a variety of levels. Current figures show students are somewhat evenly spread among Levels 1, 2, and 3; however, the true spread remains unknown for now, since more than half of current students continue to be enrolled in multi-level courses.

TABLE 1 – TRANSITIONAL STUDIES STUDENTS

ACADEMIC YEAR		1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Total Students		4,236	4,267	4,313	4,790	4,881	4,023	3,317
Course Level	Level 1 - Beginning ABE	3%	4%	6%	8%	14%	15%	13%
	Level 2 - Intermediate ABE	12%	12%	12%	10%	12%	15%	16%
	Level 3 - GED / HSD	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%	12%
	Vocational	0%	3%	5%	6%	5%	5%	7%
	Multi-level	82%	77%	73%	71%	65%	58%	52%

Note that the vocational enrollments here do not indicate total vocational enrollment but rather vocational enrollments of students not in levels 1-3.

In calculating the number of “Total Students,” only those individuals who enrolled for eight or more positive attendance hours in TRST during an academic year have been included. This eight hours threshold has been defined by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) as correlating to 0.5 credit units. In other words,

⁵ Level is derived from lowest level of enrolled courses.

individuals enrolling for fewer than eight hours or 0.5 credit units are not considered to be “students” for the purposes of state accountability and other reporting.⁶ Thus, most of the data in this report excludes students who attend TRST courses for fewer than eight hours in an academic year.⁷ All references to TRST students should be assumed to follow that definition unless explicitly stated otherwise.

As an open-entry, open-exit department, Transitional Studies does experience a “drop in” phenomenon: would-be students who attend for one or two class meetings only. Toward the end of the report, figures pertaining to individuals enrolling fewer than eight hours will be presented.

⁶ http://www.cccco.edu/divisions/tris/rp/rp_doc/raa.pdf

⁷ Note, these figures differ somewhat from those currently presented in the DSS. The DSS includes students who earned some portion of their 8 hours elsewhere (e.g., ESL) and thus are included in Transitional Studies on the basis of hours outside the department. This calculation only considers hours attended within the TRST department.

B. Description of Transitional Studies Students

Transitional Studies students are mostly young, with approximately 50% age 24 and younger. In earlier years a slim majority of students were female, but more recently a majority are male (52%). The largest ethnic group served is Latino (41%), followed by African American (25%), Asian (17%) and White (8%). The percentage of Latino students has increased slightly since 1998-99, while the percentage of White students has decreased.

TABLE 2 – TRANSITIONAL STUDIES STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

ACADEMIC YEAR		1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Total Students		4,236	4,267	4,313	4,790	4,881	4,023	3,317
Age Group	16 - 19	27%	26%	31%	26%	25%	27%	29%
	20 - 24	21%	21%	19%	22%	22%	23%	22%
	25 - 29	13%	12%	12%	12%	14%	13%	12%
	30 - 34	11%	11%	10%	11%	11%	9%	9%
	35 - 39	9%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%
	40 - 49	11%	12%	11%	12%	13%	12%	14%
	50 Plus	8%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%	7%
Gender	Female	52%	51%	49%	49%	48%	46%	48%
	Male	48%	49%	51%	51%	52%	54%	52%
Ethnic Group	African American	27%	25%	25%	24%	25%	25%	25%
	Asian	18%	18%	17%	18%	15%	16%	17%
	Filipino	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%
	Latino	38%	41%	41%	42%	43%	42%	41%
	Native American	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
	Other Nonwhite	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Pacific Islander	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
	White	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	8%

Note: "Unknown" not factored into percentages, therefore the number enrolled within each demographic subgroup cannot be strictly derived from the percentages.

A large proportion of TRST students each semester are new to the department, meaning they have not taken TRST courses previously. In some semesters, up to 66% of TRST students were new. Overall enrollment has decreased in recent years, and the proportion of students who are new to TRST has also decreased to 58%.

TABLE 3 – PERCENT OF TRANSITIONAL STUDIES STUDENTS WHO ARE NEW

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
All TRST Students	4,236	4,267	4,313	4,790	4,881	4,023	3,317
New to TRST*	2,717	2,766	2,765	3,154	3,022	2,390	1,937
Percent New to TRST	64%	65%	64%	66%	62%	59%	58%

* New to Transitional Studies i.e. first time with 8 or more hours attendance in Transitional Studies

Up to one-third of new TRST students come to TRST from Noncredit ESL, having previously or currently enrolled in noncredit ESL courses. A smaller percentage comes from noncredit Business classes.

TABLE 4 – SOURCES OF NEW STUDENTS

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
New TRST Students*	2,717	2,766	2,765	3,154	3,022	2,390	1,937
Percent from NC ESL**	31%	35%	29%	33%	31%	29%	30%
Percent from NC Business***	12%	13%	13%	15%	13%	14%	12%

* New to Transitional Studies i.e. first time with 8 or more hours attendance in Transitional Studies

** Prior or concurrent NC ESL

*** Prior or concurrent NC BUS

Table 5 displays the demographics for new TRST students. A high percentage of new students in particular are in the 16-19-year-old age bracket. In 2004-05, 39% of new students were 16-19 years old compared to 29% of all TRST students (see Table 2). In addition to being younger than TRST students as a whole, more new students are Asian, and fewer new students are African American. The gender proportions for new TRST students are similar to all TRST students. Course levels for new students are also similar to those of all TRST students (see Table 1).

TABLE 5 – NEW TO TRANSITIONAL STUDIES STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

ACADEMIC YEAR		1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Total New Students		2,717	2,766	2,765	3,154	3,022	2,390	1,937
Age Group	16 - 19	36%	32%	39%	31%	29%	36%	39%
	20 - 24	19%	20%	17%	21%	21%	19%	18%
	25 - 29	10%	10%	10%	11%	14%	12%	11%
	30 - 34	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	8%
	35 - 39	8%	9%	8%	8%	8%	7%	7%
	40 - 49	10%	12%	10%	12%	12%	11%	12%
	50 Plus	7%	8%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%
Gender	Female	51%	50%	48%	48%	46%	47%	47%
	Male	49%	50%	52%	52%	54%	53%	53%
Ethnic Group	African American	22%	20%	21%	20%	19%	19%	20%
	Asian	20%	20%	19%	21%	17%	18%	21%
	Filipino	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%
	Latino	39%	43%	43%	43%	46%	44%	42%
	Native American	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
	Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Pacific Islander	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%
	White	12%	10%	10%	9%	10%	10%	9%
Course Level	Level 1	3%	3%	6%	9%	11%	14%	12%
	Level 2	13%	13%	12%	11%	13%	16%	16%
	Level 3	4%	6%	5%	6%	5%	9%	15%
	Vocational	0%	3%	6%	8%	6%	7%	9%
	Multi-level	80%	74%	71%	67%	65%	55%	49%

Note: "Unknown" not factored into percentages, therefore the number enrolled within each demographic subgroup cannot be strictly derived from the percentages.

C. Campus Descriptions

Students attend Transitional Studies classes at multiple CCSF locations throughout San Francisco, but primarily offerings are through three campuses (John Adams, Mission, Southeast) as well as Gough Street.⁸ Most students attend classes at one campus only, with only 2-5% attending more than one campus within an academic year.⁹ John Adams (JAD) serves the largest number of TRST students and has ranged in enrollment from 1,882 at its peak to 1,255 during the most recent academic year. Graph 2 shows the proportion of enrolled students at each of the four main sites for 2004-05. Ocean and Downtown campuses also offer one or two TRST sections a semester, but since these campus offerings are minimal, the campuses will not be evaluated individually in this report and enrollment figures from these campuses are not shown in Graph 2.¹⁰

GRAPH 2

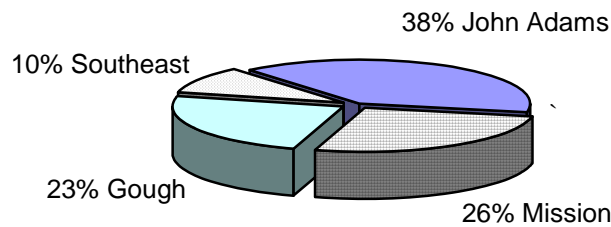


TABLE 6 – STUDENT ENROLLMENTS BY CAMPUS

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
John Adams	1,722	1,660	1,665	1,882	1,785	1,480	1,255
Mission	1,134	1,341	1,341	1,490	1,587	1,167	862
Gough Street	713	661	725	777	820	844	772
Southeast	413	313	231	381	438	409	323

Student enrollments at all four sites decreased from 2003-04 to 2004-05. The Mission (MIS) enrollment decline was the largest at 26% and is undoubtedly partially related to the physical move of the campus location. The aspects of this move which may have

⁸ Note, in general Campus codes were used to identify the site and campus. However, in some cases the building where the course was offered conflicted with the campus code. In particular many courses held at Gough Street are identified with JAD campus in the CCSF Banner system. For the purposes of this study, if the building is identified with Gough then the campus is supplanted with Gough. Similarly with other buildings and campuses.

⁹ At 8+ hours for each campus.

¹⁰ Figures for 2004-05 showed Ocean student enrollment at 109 and Downtown student enrollment at 103.

most heavily impacted on enrollments will be discussed further. Southeast (SE) student enrollments declined by 21%, JAD by 15%, and Gough by 9%.

In order to learn more deeply about the students at each campus, staff from the Office of Research, Planning and Grants conducted focus group interviews with faculty in May 2005. The rest of this section is largely comprised of excerpts from these focus groups. Data from the following table offers an important context for these interview excerpts, demonstrating that student demographics vary widely between campuses, particularly in terms of age and ethnicity. The full focus group summaries for each campus are available in the Appendix.

TABLE 7 – CAMPUS DEMOGRAPHICS

2004-05 ACADEMIC YEAR		Gough	John Adams	Mission	Southeast
Total Students		772	1,255	862	323
Age Group	16 - 19	10%	55%	9%	16%
	20 - 24	20%	23%	24%	23%
	16 - 24 subtotal	30%	78%	34%	38%
	25 - 29	15%	6%	17%	11%
	30 - 34	10%	5%	14%	10%
	35 - 39	10%	2%	11%	11%
	40 - 49	21%	6%	17%	20%
	50 Plus	13%	3%	7%	10%
Gender	Female	51%	46%	45%	57%
	Male	49%	54%	55%	43%
Ethnic Group	African American	39%	25%	3%	56%
	Asian	10%	29%	4%	13%
	Filipino	7%	8%	2%	4%
	Latino	22%	25%	89%	15%
	Native American	3%	1%	0%	1%
	Other	1%	2%	0%	1%
	Pacific Islander	2%	2%	0%	4%
	White	17%	8%	3%	5%
Course Level	Level 1	10%	20%	0%	33%
	Level 2	0%	36%	3%	0%
	Level 3	0%	23%	0%	0%
	Vocational	2%	0%	12%	17%
	Multi-level	87%	21%	85%	50%

Note: "Unknown" not factored into percentages, therefore the number enrolled within each demographic subgroup cannot be strictly derived from the percentages.

Focus groups included as many faculty as were able to participate. The researchers wish to note that they were impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the Transitional Studies faculty, who all spoke passionately on behalf of their students. Faculty used the opportunity of the focus group to advocate for student needs such as books and places to study. Faculty were also modest about their contributions to student success and continually expressed appreciation for their students' dedication while often facing difficult life circumstances. During the focus groups, researchers asked faculty in particular to focus on the challenges that they, their students, and their department face; the focus group questions, along with a complete summary of each focus group, can be viewed in the appendix.

John Adams Campus

John Adams (JAD) Transitional Studies enrollments, as noted earlier, comprise primarily students under 25 years old; 80% of students are fairly evenly distributed among Asian, Latino and African American ethnic groups. JAD serves both “traditional” TRST students as well as a number of concurrent high school students. JAD faculty members offered a number of observations about their students, many of whom may be hindered by low self-esteem, leading them to characterize themselves as “bad” and blame themselves for their lack of academic success. A large number of students are in need of comprehensive support services to help them cope with the myriad of obstacles they must overcome in order to achieve their educational goals, such as legal troubles, problems with acting out, work schedules, and significant family responsibilities, including parenthood.

Many students feel that the achievement of a GED or high school diploma will allow them the opportunity for better employment, especially when combined with further education in credit courses on CCSF's main campus. Faculty members also observed that some JAD students make a qualitative distinction between receiving a GED and receiving a high school diploma. Many feel it is important, both for their own personal sense of achievement and for their family members, to have an official high school diploma.

However, faculty members noted that beyond this immediate goal, students often have difficulty envisioning a successful future. One participant described, “Many have not had the experience of putting much in their ‘reserve tanks’ in order to believe that tomorrow is going to bring a whole lot.” Another participant describes the students as being in “survival mode.” In general, students seem to respond best to small “do-able” steps rather than long-term goals.

JAD faculty help students take these small steps in particular through a course titled *Focus on the Future*—by the end of the course, approximately 90% of students indicate that they intend to take credit classes. Another workshop—*Steps to Credit*—also assists students in working toward a goal of enrolling in credit classes. *Steps to Credit* is run by counselors and provides students with priority registration for credit. In addition, JAD has increased the rigor of the high school diploma program in order to, hopefully, increase success rates for those students who do transition to credit.

JAD faculty members also observed that retention can be a problem in their courses. Students often have a number of responsibilities that may disrupt their coursework, from

childcare to work to court-mandated meetings and probation requirements. However, a sense of community in the classroom, such as the feeling that students will be missed if they don't come back, helps increase retention. One participant noted, "When a class is working, it can override students' personal problems." Hands-on and group activities were cited as tools to promote retention.

Mission Campus

Mission Campus has the second-largest TRST enrollment. As noted earlier, the MIS enrollment recently decreased by 26%. A primary reason for the decrease was cited by faculty as the move in physical campus location. Faculty suggested that some students may have difficulty getting to the current temporary location, while others may have concerns about gang activity in the area. In addition, the Department of Corrections has recently begun referring individuals to the Mission Campus TRST program. Some faculty members are concerned that this new trend may exacerbate gang-related issues. Faculty members requested professional development to assist them in handling these concerns so that they can continue to serve as many students as possible in a safe and effective learning environment. Further addressing recent enrollment issues, faculty observed that students generally learn about TRST programs by word-of-mouth; they would like to rectify this by creating some method(s) of advertising TRST programs.

Most TRST courses currently offered at MIS campus are bilingual; as mentioned earlier, nearly 90% of MIS students identify as Latino. Unlike at JAD, a majority of MIS students (66%) are 25 years old or older. Faculty estimate that more than half of MIS TRST students are immigrants needing assistance with academic skills, often originally from the Yucatan Peninsula. This population generally places a high value on education. Typically these students enter the U.S. with the equivalent of a third grade education.

A number of MIS TRST students can be characterized as young students entering the program at a relatively high skill level with key gaps in their education, such as math or writing skills. In general, these students attend for one semester or less, by which time they are able to pass the GED.

Following the JAD model, MIS is piloting high school classes for concurrent high school students in Fall 2005. Faculty members hope that this will be an area of growth for them and look forward to teaching English sections, as well as teaching bilingual English-Spanish sections. Mission faculty echoed JAD faculty regarding student goals: as students persist in their studies, they become more focused on skills than on credentials. With each student success, large or small, MIS faculty members are encouraged and further motivated by the belief that positively affecting the current generation will assist future generations.

Gough Street

Gough Street's Transitional Studies enrollment has traditionally been somewhat smaller than Mission's enrollment. Students at Gough are very diverse in age, and although the African American ethnic group is the largest group at 39%, there are sizable enrollments by Asian/Filipino/Pacific Islander, Latino and White students (19%, 22%, 17% respectively).

Faculty indicated that while students come from a variety of educational and economic backgrounds, the majority have grown up and been educated in the United States but have not completed their education. Gough Street faculty members echoed the observations of the colleagues at other TRST campuses, noting students are often weighed down by years of negative feedback that they have internalized as well as emotional baggage over earlier failures. Some students label themselves “slow” or incapable of learning; many, however, may suffer from undiagnosed learning disorders. Faculty have observed students who are bright but unable to express themselves in writing, quite possibly due to dyslexia. Many of these students have accepted others’ assessment that they are simply not smart enough. In general, Gough Street student skill levels tend to be weakest in writing and math. In order to identify remedial learning difficulties, students may see a reading diagnostician. There are two instructors at Gough who are reading specialists.

Both day and evening programs are offered at Gough Street, and faculty observed that the student population is fairly evenly split between the two programs. Evening students are often employed, while day students generally are not. Faculty described that most of their students begin the TRST program with the goal of receiving a GED, but some expand their goals as they begin to learn more and become more confident. For many, the GED represents a personal milestone and validation that they are on the same level as the general public, and it sets a positive example for their children and grandchildren.

Like current Mission program offerings, nearly all TRST offerings at Gough Street are multi-level and contain self-paced components. Some students thrive under the individual attention they receive in this semi-structured environment; other students have difficulty. Retention issues can be exacerbated by students who feel overwhelmed and assume that the course(s) is too difficult for them; even though this may not be true, these students are prone to dropping out. Other students may have unrealistic timelines in mind, not realizing how long it will take them to reach their goals. While, for some, achieving a GED in a year's time is simply not possible, faculty are eager to work closely with students to help them succeed academically and personally.

Southeast Campus

The Southeast TRST program is the smallest of the four campuses, approximately 25% the size of the JAD TRST program. As at Mission and Gough Street, a substantial portion of Southeast TRST students are 25 years old or older. Only 39% of students are 24 years old or younger; this is a significant change from previous years—in 1998-99, the percentage was 59%. Southeast’s program has the largest proportion of female students of all the campuses. At 56%, it also serves the largest proportion of African American students. This figure is actually down from previous years when it was as high as 69%. In 2004-05, figures for Asian/Filipino/Pacific Islander, Latino, and White students were 21%, 15%, 5% respectively.

Currently there are two full-time faculty and no part-time faculty at SEC. One faculty member provided written comments in response to the focus group questions. Per the respondent, the majority of students as “re-entry people who aspire to get a GED,” and are “trying to do better the second time around.” Other student goals include the ability to assist their children with homework, improving their English skills (for ESL students),

and improving their reading ability. The faculty member notes that success is often limited by lack of childcare. In addition, some students are required to attend classes and may lack motivation. Those who are successful “are determined to improve their life.”

Enrollment patterns were characterized as, at least in some instances, hinging on employment; students stop attending when they get a job, and come back when they need more education to advance in their field. SEC offers a supportive environment which includes tutors, computers, videos, filmstrips, television and adult volunteers—these services improve retention. The faculty member indicates that TRST at SEC has “a community feeling” with “wonderful counseling support.” According to SEC faculty, “Usually several students transfer to the main campus ... [and] most of the students attain their goals.”

Perspective from Department Chair

Department chair Jane Sneed describes the ways in which the TRST department recognizes student achievement:

The students in Transitional Studies often state that their academic goal is to pass the GED. In reality, this may be a long-term goal for many, so when the day finally arrives, it is one to be celebrated. The Transitional Studies Department celebrates success through graduation ceremonies held in May. At the Adult Learning and Tutorial Center, certificates are given out for attendance, achievement, and successful passage of level examinations; scholarships are awarded; speakers share inspiring words or read stories and poems they have written; and finally, the GED graduates walk across the stage in caps and gowns. The various certificates serve to build self-esteem for all of the students who come to the ceremony. Similarly, at John Adams, the GED graduates and the High School Diploma graduates are fêted with a dinner, a keynote speaker, and a commencement ceremony. At the Mission Campus, after the bilingual ceremony replete with caps and gowns, the graduates and their families enjoy cake and refreshments. While students may attain their GED or high school diploma anytime during the year, by inviting them to return in May to the graduation, we not only celebrate their achievement, but encourage their classmates to persevere in their studies.

D. Description of Support Services for Transitional Studies Students

A general comment from all focus groups was that the small number of full-time faculty at each campus (five full-time faculty at JAD, and two at MIS, for example) limits what faculty can do to assist students outside of classroom time. Gough Street faculty members mentioned that hiring and retaining school aides is an area of difficulty for them.

In addition to staffing issues, faculty members frequently expressed concern over the fact that noncredit students are generally not eligible for financial aid. Furthermore, lack of financial resources within the TRST department affect the availability of textbooks, readers, other books, and supplies. Due to constraints on the department and students alike, TRST students often do not have the books they need to assist them with their studies. Faculty noted that reading from a photocopy does not provide the same experience as reading from the book itself. However, JAD faculty also mentioned the

library and its staff as an important resource for students. SEC also has a library that students are shown how to use.

Transitional Studies collaborates with various Counseling departments – particularly New Student Counseling – and Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSPS) to provide support services to students. JAD faculty described connections to DSPS as “improving;” however, faculty are not informed of students’ learning disabilities unless students themselves report them, making it difficult to fully address the needs of students who may have learning disabilities. The mandatory orientation at JAD now includes a presentation by DSPS about programs and services available to students.

Moreover, JAD faculty noted that coordinating with New Student Counseling can be challenging due to the fact that records have not historically been computerized and the information that students receive is not always consistent.¹¹ JAD faculty proposed creating a position for a faculty coordinator or advisor, similar to the one the ESL Department provides, who would be able to help integrate student services at JAD.

Mission faculty cited students’ greatest needs as those for financial, childcare and domestic abuse services. Some students, they noted, simply need a safe, quiet location to study. Faculty indicated that the single DSPS faculty person at MIS is not able to meet all the needs of students. MIS faculty also brought up their desire to have a faculty advisor position to assist students with educational and career planning.

Gough Street has a DSPS counselor who visits twice a week to meet individually with students. Students are referred by faculty for help with accommodations for learning disabilities, psychological issues, and social service referrals. In addition, two faculty members at Gough are reading specialists who do diagnostic testing.

Many faculty members also expressed the need to ease the transition from TRST into credit courses. For example, students in the past took tours of Ocean campus (where the bulk of credit offerings occur), and were thereby able to reduce their anxiety and better move into the credit “world.” That need to have some kind of regular process to begin acculturating noncredit students to credit (for those who are close to making that move) was expressed in each focus group.

E. Student Survey Results

In Fall 2005, 393 Transitional Studies students responded to a survey about noncredit courses and services. Surveys were completed in class, with Spanish and Chinese translations available to those who needed them. Respondents were representative of Fall 2005 TRST students by both age and gender. All TRST campuses were represented but responses from Gough were lower than expected; 6% of respondents were from the Gough campus whereas 21% of the Fall 2005 TRST population enrolled in courses at Gough. In contrast, responses from JAD were higher than expected: 49% of respondents were from JAD while JAD represented only 39% of the entire Fall 2005 TRST

¹¹ According to Lindy McKnight, Dean of Student Support Services, an electronic educational plan is currently being implemented in counseling departments for credit students. Electronic educational plans will be implemented for a limited number of non-credit programs; however, she expects that full non-credit implementation is still a year or two away.

population. A higher percentage of Asian students responded than expected (23% vs. 18%); a lower percentage of white students responded (4% vs. 9%).

Regarding credit classes, 35% have already taken at least one credit class, 72% are interested in credit classes, but only 42% have received information about credit classes and services. In terms of vocational courses, 24% of respondents have already taken at least one vocational class, 57% have some interest in vocational classes, but only 23% indicated that they have received information about vocational classes. When asked about employment, 19% responded that they are employed full-time, 16% are regularly employed part-time, 8% have occasional part-time work, and 22% are looking for work. Furthermore, 23% are not employed, 5% are retired, 3% are homemakers, and the other 4% are some combination of the above-listed categories. Only 38% indicated that their first language is English.

TRST students indicated strong general satisfaction with noncredit (and by implication, TRST). For example, 89% would recommend CCSF noncredit classes to a friend, 92% feel accepted at their campus, 81% feel that students show respect for one another, and 94% feel that teachers are supportive. The figures drop somewhat when asked whether other employees and staff “support me”¹² – 69% answered this question affirmatively.

Students were asked to rate instruction and services on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 indicates “poor,” 2 indicates “fair,” 3 indicates “good,” and 4 indicates “excellent.” TRST students on average rated all services as “good” or “excellent” except food services, which were rated “fair” overall at 2.23. The highest rating was given to quality of instruction, which received an overall average rating of 3.32.

Students also made the following observations about their educational experience: 74% indicated that they “receive clear, accurate information about noncredit classes and services,” 76% indicated that it was “easy to find out about classes offered here” and a slightly higher percentage (78%) indicated, “[c]ounselors and teachers help me get the classes I want.” Also, 77% of students indicated that classes are offered at “times that are convenient for [them].” In addition, 86% said that “[b]ecoming a student at this school is easy” and a similar percentage indicated that “registering for classes is easy.”

Transitional Studies students at Mission and John Adams, combined, rated the safety of their campuses at 72%; this figure is lower than the safety rating reported by students in other noncredit departments (87%). Further examination of the data shows that factors influencing safety ratings include what time of day students attend classes as well as students’ age. Nonetheless, the data suggests that at both JAD and MIS, TRST students feel considerably less safe than other students.¹³

The survey also asked students to consider challenges they face that might interfere with their academic success; 41% of TRST respondents indicated no “big problems” which interfered with their studies at CCSF. The largest problem indicated was “work schedule conflict” at 22%, followed by “other” at 12%. Of those who indicated “other”, there

¹² All student comments presented in quotation form are taken verbatim from the survey, without editing.

¹³ Figures for Gough and SEC will be explored in further detail, along with JAD and MIS, in subsequent reports.

were many issues indicated, approximately 1/3 of which could be addressed by the College, including “learning difficulties” and “insufficient help in class.”

Fifty-five TRST students (14% of TRST respondents) included some kind of written comment at the end of their survey. Since teachers distributed and collected the survey personally, the survey is not necessarily an ideal means for gathering frank feedback on teachers or instruction. The only negative comments on teaching were that one teacher is “not always in a good mood” and that another class is “boring.” (Fortunately, those two respondents were satisfied with other aspects of their noncredit program experience.) By contrast, the survey did generate a wealth of positive comments on teachers and teaching. Many students commented that their teachers are “helpful” and “encouraging” and that their clear explanations help students understand the material. Said one, “What I like most about the non-credit classes are the teachers. I like how they are very understanding and help me with any questions that I have. Overall I feel comfortable at this school.”

There were very many positive comments regarding “interesting” class content, as well as numerous general comments praising teaching methodology, with some students giving special mention to group activities and the opportunity for speaking practice in class. One student, who had gotten only worksheets up to that point, wondered hopefully whether there would be any group instruction on math in his TRST class. But students also felt it was important to be able to progress at their own pace.

In light of the fact that students do not receive grades in noncredit classes, and in that sense receive less direct feedback on progress, it was interesting that one of the most frequent types of comments was that students *had noticed their own skills and knowledge increasing* as a result of participation in the program. Essentially those students testified to their own view of the effectiveness of the program in terms of teaching and learning. Said one English-learner, “Now, if I meet a stranger, I am no [sic] in fear of speaking to them. Thank God.” The main improvement that some English-learners sought was some type of certificate that they could show potential employers to document their level of proficiency or their accomplishments in the program.

There was virtually no criticism of the noncredit mode of instruction, in which generally there is little homework, with students reinforcing their learning during the class itself. Although one student thought there should be more homework, another said, “I have been taking non-credit classes since last semester. Actually taking credit classes and taking non-credit classes [there] is not a big difference between them.” Another said she thought the courses were good preparation for the university and one student praised the quality of the free classes, saying, “When I came to this country my first English school was a private school. But soon I couldn't afford it that is why I came to CCSF. I was expecting that the class would be in a low level in comparison with my class school because it was free, and now I can tell that I was wrong and my English classes here are even better.” The fact that the classes are free was what some students liked most. One student summed up what he liked best: “Free, and I have a second shot to get a diploma.”

Many students commented positively on the benefits of small class size, with one saying, “What I like most is that the classes are small and you can learn more when there are ten students in a class rather than thirty. Another reason I like the school is because it is a college campus.” Students made positive comments about the campuses, describing

them as clean, safe, and well organized. However, one was bothered by restroom graffiti, and some pointed to the lack of pay phones which would have enabled them to make calls home as needed.

A number of students commented on scheduling issues, but the feedback was evenly balanced between those who praised the current schedule and those who wanted more frequent classes or a greater variety of times. Some students wanted more vocational or computer classes and several said they needed to have more information about other noncredit classes besides the ones they were taking. In general, students were less positive in their comments about student services than about instruction.

There is an effort to ensure that noncredit students receive a high level of student services at CCSF, although the number of services received by individual students is not usually as great as it is for credit students because of funding disparities. One student noted the lack of a library at her campus, although libraries are planned for the new campuses. The need for counselors to give full and correct information was noted by a couple of students and one said that better records needed to be kept on high school graduation. Some thought that all students should receive more information from the start about the GED /High School Diploma Program so that they would be aware of it. Some thought that A&E personnel needed to be more patient or more attentive. One student commented, “Because a lot of people are recent arrivals from other countries and they don't even know how things work in this country, they need a lot of explanation.” But overall, the high level of student satisfaction with noncredit was summed up by this student's conclusion: “I will keep going on. This is my cup of tea.”

II. STUDENT PROGRESS & SUCCESS IN TRANSITIONAL STUDIES

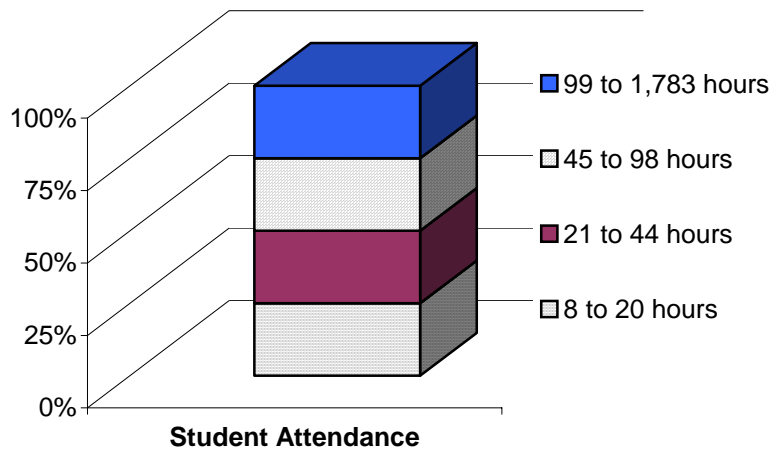
A. Average Student Enrollment

On average, students enroll in just over two sections per academic year. This suggests that a majority of TRST students either enroll in only one section at a time or for two sections in just one term. Determining the “average” number of positive attendance hours for which Transitional Studies student enroll each year is somewhat more difficult than one might expect. This is largely due to the wide range of attendance patterns. Student may attend for as many as 1,800 hours or as few as eight hours.¹⁴ This wide range limits the usefulness of the traditional calculation of “average”. Instead, we will use a “quartile” analysis to see where students fall. For those who wish to review calculations of the “average” and/or review the details on section enrollment, please see the Appendix.

¹⁴ Some attended for even less than eight—see the beginning of the report for a discussion of the CCCC definition of “student” and end of the report for discussion of “drops”.

Quartile analysis looks at data for 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% of students enrolled. For example, for 2004-05, 25% of students attended between 8 and 20 hours. Another 25% attended 99 or more hours. The middle 50% of TRST students attended between 21 and 98 hours. Viewing the figures slightly differently, 75% of TRST students attended for fewer than 99 hours.

GRAPH 3



The figures shown above have been largely stable from 1998-99 to present, with one exception. While the proportion of students who attend 99 hours or more in an academic year has remained essentially unchanged, the number of hours attended by those students has been increasing over the years. In 1998-99, 10% of students attended between 185 and 1,050 hours. By 2004-05, 10% of students attended between 215 and 1,783 hours.

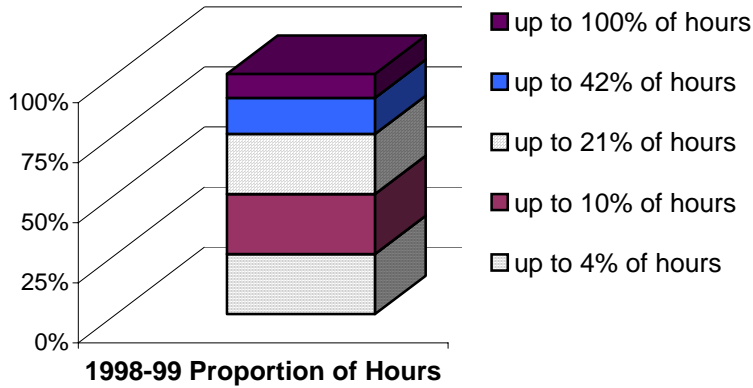
More details are available in the Appendix.

What does it mean for a student to attend 20, or 200, hours of TRST classes? To understand the number of hours attended, it is helpful to think about it in comparison to a standard high school curriculum. In a given academic year, high school students are required by the California Department of Education (CDE) to attend a minimum of 64,800 minutes within the school year. This roughly equates to 1,296 hours (using a 50 minute hour) attended during each academic year. In comparing TRST student attendance against this figure, it becomes clear that only a small handful of TRST students use CCSF courses to meet or exceed the state-mandated guideline for high school attendance.

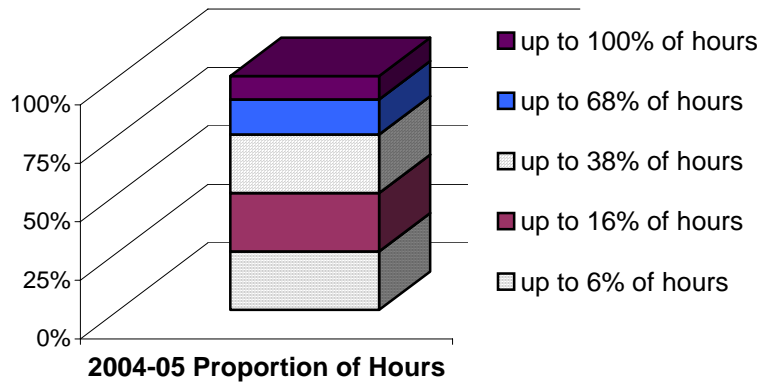
Some TRST students who come in with specific deficits will be about to complete the GED—perhaps even the high school diploma—in a relatively short period of time with only a few hours attended. However, for those students who begin their enrollment in TRST with large educational deficiencies, and who struggle with competing demands (such as family or work), the completion of the program will require many semesters due to the relatively small number of hours most TRST students attend each year.

In 1998-99, half of TRST students attended only 10%—at most—of the TRST class hours offered for those section(s) in which they were enrolled (see Graph 4). In other words, a majority of students attended only a small proportion of the class meetings. However, the percentage of class hours which students attend has been increasing, as evident in the 2004-05 figures in Graph 5. The top quartile in each of these graphs has been divided to show the 90% mark as well. (Detail in Appendix.)

GRAPH 4



GRAPH 5



Note: These figures represent the total hours within the academic year for the CRNs in which the student has enrolled, as compared to the student's actual attendance hours. This table does not account for when the student began the term or whether the student stopped out for any period of time.

B. GED Certificate Recipients

Between 400 and 500 people each academic year earn their high school equivalency by taking the General Education Development (GED) exam at a CCSF testing facility. Since Fall 2002¹⁵, 1,399 individuals have successfully passed all necessary components of the GED. Who are the GED completers? Nearly 60% come directly from Transitional Studies.

TABLE 8 - Number of GED Recipients

	Fall Terms			Spring Terms			Total
	2002	2003	2004	2003	2004	2005	
All GED Recipients	163	174	134	309	345	274	1,399
GED with Prior TRST	101	116	78	181	193	155	824
Percent from TRST	62%	67%	58%	59%	56%	57%	59%

¹⁵ Data in Banner for GED prior of Spring 2002 is limited and unreliable. Spring 2002 data is also reliable, but is not presented here in order to align with subsequent tables.

Transitional Studies GED completers are younger than the overall TRST student population. They are more likely to be male; while 48% of all TRST students in 2004-2005 were female, only 38% of GED completers were women. Overall, the largest ethnic group to enroll in TRST courses is Latino, and this is also the largest group of GED completers. However, the percentage of Latino students to complete the GED dropped sharply in 2004-05. This may be another effect of the change in location of the Mission campus, which, as noted previously, serves a large Latino population and offers bilingual language GED test preparation. In TRST, White students comprise a relatively small proportion of the population, but these students are more likely to complete the GED when compared to their proportion in the department as a whole. Moreover, since 2002-2003, fewer than 8% of students each year enrolled in TRST completed their GED.

TABLE 9 - Demographics of GED Recipients Previously Enrolled in TRST

		GED after TRST			ALL TRST ENROLLED		
		2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
TRST Students		282	309	233	4,881	4,023	3,317
Age Group	16 - 19	28%	22%	34%	25%	27%	29%
	20 - 24	25%	33%	27%	22%	23%	22%
	16 - 24 subtotal	52%	54%	61%	47%	50%	51%
	25 - 29	17%	13%	13%	14%	13%	12%
	30 - 34	12%	12%	7%	11%	9%	9%
	35 - 39	7%	7%	6%	8%	8%	7%
	40 - 49	9%	11%	11%	13%	12%	14%
	50 Plus	3%	2%	2%	8%	8%	7%
Gender	Female	43%	44%	38%	48%	46%	48%
	Male	57%	56%	62%	52%	54%	52%
Ethnic Group	African American	17%	16%	17%	25%	25%	25%
	Asian	14%	17%	23%	15%	16%	17%
	Filipino	5%	5%	8%	5%	5%	5%
	Latino	46%	45%	29%	43%	42%	41%
	Native American	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Other Nonwhite	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
	Pacific Islander	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%
	White	15%	13%	18%	8%	8%	8%

The following table shows Transitional Studies students who completed the GED by the campus(es) of their last TRST semester prior to achieving the GED. A small percentage attended more than one campus during this time or attended a smaller campus (e.g., Downtown). In 2004-05, the number and percentage of Mission GED recipients diminished considerably. Some or all of this decline can be attributed to the physical change in campus location which affected overall enrollments.

In 2002-03 and 2003-04, 36% of GED completion was associated with John Adams campus—a percentage nearly identical to its enrollment proportion for those years (see Graph 2 / Table 6). Mission GED figures are also similar to its enrollment proportion for those two academic years. Figures for Mission Campus TRST GED completers for 2004-05 are far below prior figures. Gough Street, however, evidences a higher proportion of GED completers, compared to its enrollment for 2002-03 and 2003-04. While it accounts for 17% to 21% of TRST students in 2002-03 and 2003-04, it accounts for 27% of GED recipients in both academic years.

TABLE 10 - Campus of GED Recipients Previously Enrolled in TRST

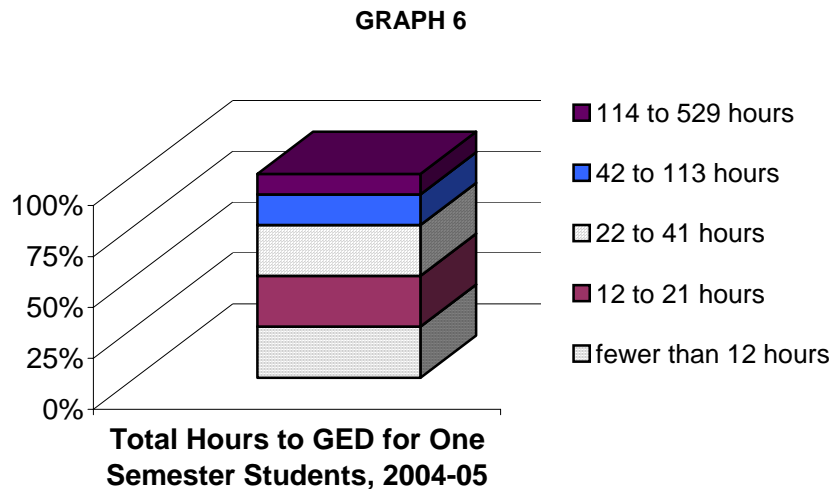
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
John Adams	102	111	122	36%	36%	52%
Mission	82	90	24	29%	29%	10%
Gough Street	76	83	72	27%	27%	31%
Southeast	15	9	7	5%	3%	3%
Multiple / Other	6	15	7	2%	5%	3%
Total GED Recipients	282	309	233	100%	100%	100%

C. Time to GED Completion

For many Transitional Studies students, the time it takes to achieve GED completion is relatively short. Between 45% and 50% of those students completing a GED in the 2002-03 to 2004-05 academic years took only one semester of TRST courses. In fact, more than a quarter (27%) passed the GED during their first semester in a Transitional Studies course. Nearly all completers (93% to 96% of completers) enroll in TRST for five or fewer semesters (excluding “stop-out semesters”¹⁶) Of the small number of students needing more than five semesters to complete their GED, some enrolled for more than 10 years (21 semesters).

¹⁶ “Stop-outs” refer the periods of time where at student may temporarily discontinue enrollment.

For those 45% to 50% of students completing the GED during or after only one semester of TRST instruction, the bulk of students (the “middle 50%”) attended between 12 and 41 hours of instruction. This is the rough equivalent of between 1.7-5.6 days of high school.¹⁷ The other half was split: 25% attended fewer than 12 hours, 25% attended more than 41 hours (up to 529 hours, or approximately 15 weeks in high school). In Graph 6, the top quartile has been subdivided to show the 90% mark.



Students who take between two and five semesters to complete their GED, enrolled for up to 927 hours, equivalent to approximately 26 weeks of full-time attendance in high school. However, the 4% to 7% of students who took longer than five semesters to complete their GED (up to 21 semesters), enrolled for up to 4,148 hours, or roughly 3.3 years in high school. Almost without exception, TRST students complete the GED within less time than an SFUSD student is required to be enrolled to earn a high school diploma.

With stop-outs included, the average time to completion changes considerably. Excluding the 45% to 50% who completed within one semester (and therefore obviously did not stop out), a majority of TRST students had at least one stop-out semester. Even those who earned their GED using two semesters of enrollment generally have had at least one stop-out semester. Approximately 58% to 62% of those enrolled for two semesters stopped out for at least one semester.¹⁸

D. High School Diploma (CCSF HSD) Recipients

In 2004-05, there were 55 students who received a CCSF HSD from the TRST department (the first year for which accurate records are available). In the immediate semester following their HSD completion, only 35% of students enrolled in credit classes. Since 2004-05 is a recent academic year, any further progress of these HSD completers is unknown. Of the 19 who continued into credit, half (ten students) enrolled in English courses ranging from L through 96; fewer enrolled in math. Given these small

¹⁷ Calculations are made based on a 180-day academic year, assuming 7 hours of school attendance per day. All calculation of equivalent time spent in high school are approximate.

¹⁸ For the purposes of this analysis, a stop-out refers only to a non-enrollment in a major Fall or Spring semester.

numbers, the success of these students in their immediate credit experience and subsequent enrollments will have to be examined at a future date.

III. STUDENT ENROLLMENT & SUCCESS IN SUBSEQUENT CREDIT COURSEWORK

The initial intention of this section was to address the questions about the success of Transitional Studies students by comparing CCSF HSD and GED “completers.” However, as noted above, the high school diploma group for whom there is accurate data is extremely small and represents only the most recent academic year. Therefore, the comparison will look at GED recipients coming from Transitional Studies as compared to new, first-time credit students who did not enroll in TRST courses.

A. How many GED completers enroll in credit classes? What are their demographics?

Of the 591 students who completed the GED in 2002-03 or 2003-04 after (or while) enrolling in TRST courses, 33% (196 students) enrolled in credit courses during following year.¹⁹

¹⁹ The “following year” includes one of more of the following Summer, Fall and Spring semesters. The figure excludes students (n=13) who enrolled in credit during the same term as they earned their GED, but then did not re-enroll in credit within the following year. For purposes of confining the analysis to the effect of TRST preparation on credit success, these students have been excluded.

**TABLE 11 - Demographics of Credit Students
GED after TRST compared to New First-Time**

		Credit with GED after TRST		New First-Time Credit with No TRST	
		2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
TRST Students		100	96	5,739	4,503
Age Group	16 - 19	35%	30%	34%	42%
	20 - 24	28%	34%	24%	25%
	16 - 24 subtotal	63%	64%	59%	66%
	25 - 29	13%	14%	13%	10%
	30 - 34	11%	10%	8%	6%
	35 - 39	5%	3%	6%	5%
	40 - 49	4%	8%	8%	6%
	50 Plus	4%	0%	6%	6%
Ethnic Group	African American	15%	17%	9%	11%
	Asian	23%	27%	37%	36%
	Filipino	6%	5%	8%	9%
	Latino	34%	28%	17%	18%
	Native American	1%	2%	1%	1%
	Other Nonwhite	3%	4%	3%	3%
	Pacific Islander	2%	4%	1%	1%
	White	15%	12%	24%	20%

TRST GED recipients, as mentioned in the prior section, are younger than the overall TRST population. Table 11 shows that those who subsequently enroll in credit courses within a year are younger still—roughly similar in age to new, first-time credit students. Gender figures show no specific trends.

Perhaps the most interesting trends are seen in ethnicity. Discussion of the data presented in Table 9 included the fact that not as many African American TRST students are completing the GED as are enrolled in TRST courses. More recently, figures for Latino GED recipients have also declined. Despite these lower GED completion figures, Table 11 shows that African American and Latino students represent a relatively large proportion of the TRST GED students who subsequently enroll in credit—up to 49% of those who continue into credit identify as African American or Latino. In contrast, the proportion of new, first-time students who identify as African American or Latino ranges from 26% to 29%. Although the real numbers are small (49% actually corresponds to fewer than 50 students), there is potential for the Transitional Studies department to help increase the number of African American and Latino students who enroll in credit courses.

B. In which types of credit classes do they enroll?

Students from Transitional Studies who receive their GED and enroll in credit courses, enroll in the following areas:

**TABLE 12 - Number and Percent of Students Enrolled in Credit Departments
Transitional Studies GED Recipients Compared to New First-Time Credit Students**

Students Enrolled By Department Combined 2002-03 + 2003-04	Number of TRST GED Students Enrolled in Credit Departments	Percent of TRST GED Students Enrolled in Credit Departments	New First-Time Students Enrolled in Credit Departments*	Percent of New First-Time Enrolled in Credit Departments
English	76	39%	3,693	36%
Physical Education	68	35%	3,116	30%
Learning Assistance	66	34%	4,380	43%
Mathematics	62	32%	3,388	33%
Social Sciences	48	24%	2,936	29%
Behavioral Sciences	36	18%	2,281	22%
English as a Second Language	32	16%	2,170	21%
Foreign Language	32	16%	2,167	21%
Business	29	15%	1,510	15%
Biological Sciences	15	8%	1,056	10%
Health Science	14	7%	1,027	10%
Music	14	7%	1,203	12%
Asian American Studies	13	7%	Only the "top 12" departments with the largest enrollments are presented for new first-time since these are also "top 12" enrolled for TRST GED, after which enrollment differs.	
Health Care Technology	12	6%		
Administration of Justice	11	6%		
Computer Networking & IT	11	6%		
Astronomy	10	5%		
Child Development	10	5%		
Interdisciplinary Studies	10	5%		
TOTAL, Unduplicated	196	n/a		10,242

* New First time excludes students previously enrolled in TRST.

Notes: unduplicated by department, includes drops, excludes departments with fewer than 10 TRST GED recipients.

It is worth noting that it would appear that a higher percentage of new first-time students avail themselves of Learning Assistance resources than do TRST GED students.

C. How do GED completers perform in credit English?

The data in Table 13 suggests that GED recipients coming from TRST into credit do not perform as well in English as new, first-time students not from TRST, with the exception of English 92 and English 9 where success rates are nearly identical. However, it is important to consider that the total number of GED completers in credit English is only 19 students. Thus, the percentages shown in Table 13 are not as reliable as they would be with a larger group of students. More time is needed to collect additional data for evaluation in order to confirm or disconfirm the suggested differences in success rates.

**TABLE 13 - Student Performance in Credit English
Transitional Studies GED Recipients Compared to New First-Time Credit Students**

Students Enrolled In English Combined 2002-03 + 2003-04	TRST GED Students	Success Percent for TRST GED**	New First- Time Students*	Success Percent for New First- Time
English 90 - Basic Composition and Reading I	17	53%	791	72%
English 9 - Reading, Study Skills and Vocabulary--Intermediate	14	67%	460	65%
English 92 - Basic Composition and Reading II	18	69%	653	71%
English 94 - Intermediate...Reading and Composition	19	58%	943	70%
English 96 - Advanced Intermediate... Reading and Composition	18	56%	1,038	72%
English 1A - University Parallel Reading and Composition	9	38%	701	70%
Other English (primarily K and L)	16	82%	857	75%

* New First time excludes students previously enrolled in TRST.

** Based on most successful enrollment in a given course within the year.

Notes: unduplicated by course, includes drops in number of students; drops, RDs excluded from success calculation.

D. How do GED completers perform in credit mathematics?

TRST GED completers who enroll in mathematics appear to perform better than new, first-time students at the Math E level, but not as well at the Math 840 level.

**TABLE 14 - Student Performance in Credit Mathematics
Transitional Studies GED Recipients Compared to New First-Time Credit Students**

Students Enrolled In Mathematics Combined 2002-03 + 2003-04	TRST GED Students	Success Percent for TRST GED**	New First- Time Students*	Success Percent for New First- Time
Math E - Basic Mathematics	27	65%	1,049	55%
Math 840 - Elementary Algebra	25	59%	807	69%
Other Math***	26	68%	2,786	79%

* New First time excludes students previously enrolled in TRST.

** Based on most successful enrollment in a given course within the year.

*** Primarily 860, 80, R for TRST; 860, 110A, 90, 80 for New First time

Notes: unduplicated by course, includes drops in number of students; drops, "report delayd's" excluded from success calculation.

E. How do GED completers perform in other transfer-level courses?

The most commonly enrolled in transferable courses—discounting math and English—for TRST GED students are the introductory courses for Economics, Political Science and Psychology. TRST GED students appear to do slightly better than new, first-time students in Economics. Again, the numbers of TRST GED students enrolling are low, so findings are merely suggestive at best. When looking at the data for all transferable courses that GED completers enroll in the year following achievement of the GED, the TRST students appear to perform slightly worse than new, first-time students.

**TABLE 15 - Student Performance in Transferable Courses
Transitional Studies GED Recipients Compared to New First-Time Credit Students**

Students Enrolled In Transferable Courses Combined 2002-03 + 2003-04	TRST GED Students	Success Percent for TRST GED**	New First- Time Students*	Success Percent for New First- Time
Economics 1	15	86%	930	72%
Political Science 1	16	67%	1,004	71%
Psychology 1	17	53%	1,403	62%
All Transferable Enrollments (excluding ENGL, MATH, PE, LERN)	514	63%	30,585	69%

* New First time excludes students previously enrolled in TRST.

** Based on most successful enrollment in a given course within the year for individual courses (CRN term data)

Notes: unduplicated by course, includes drops in number of students; drops, "report delayed's" excluded from success calculation.

F. How many GED completers earn a CCSF Associate degree or Certificate?

From 2002-03 through 2004-05, only 12 GED completers from TRST enrolled in credit courses and subsequently earned a degree or certificate. Two earned degrees—the remainder earned one or more certificates.

G. What percentage of CCSF Associate degree or Certificate recipients initially enrolled in Transitional Studies?

In examining TRST success from another angle, the data reveals that up to 10% of students who received a degree or certificate from 2002-2003 through 2004-2005 have been enrolled in the CCSF Transitional Studies program at some point since 1984.

IV. THE DROP-IN PHENOMENON

As discussed in the beginning of this report, the State Chancellor's Office created a definition for "student headcount enrollment" (i.e. number of students) which requires at least eight hours of positive attendance for an individual to be counted as a student.²⁰

The Transitional Studies department has a large number of individuals who "drop in" for fewer than eight hours of class and don't return during that academic year. The proportion of students who drop in but don't stay during any given year is approximately 23%.

Some of these individuals are students who have attended eight hours in prior years or eventually return in subsequent years. Given that TRST is open-entry/open-exit, it is not surprising that students may not abide by the semester timeframe. Some, for example, may begin their coursework in May at the end of one academic year and continue into the following academic year.

However, some of these individuals cannot properly be termed "students." In examining only those individuals who drop in during a given academic year and don't ever return, the 23% drop-in figure becomes 14%. This 14% represents from 600 to nearly 1,000 students every year who drop in on a few TRST class meetings but don't stay long enough to meet the state's definition of a "student." The 14% figure corroborates faculty observations discussed in this report.

It can be surmised that many—perhaps most—of the individuals who do not meet the eight hour threshold may attend a TRST section because they were mandated to do so and/or referred by the Department of Human Services, the court system, or other governmental agencies. JAD faculty noted that some students show up simply to get the appropriate papers signed to meet their general assistance requirements; these students are often never seen in class for the rest of the term. MIS faculty reported similar problems. (Faculty in at both campuses stated that they sometimes had to refuse to sign paperwork verifying that the individual attended a certain number of classes when they had in fact not met the attendance requirements.)

Other comments regarding drops and drop-ins suggested that sometimes students, particularly older students, may be daunted by the coursework or have unrealistic educational goals, and drop out as a result (Gough Street). Some students who would benefit from DSPS services never properly tested and drop out due to frustration (JAD). Faculty indicate a need for more "special testing." One JAD faculty member shared the concern that individuals might take free services for granted. Another reason that individuals may fail to persist can be the lack of adequate study space. One JAD faculty member requested that there be a study lab for students; MIS faculty commented that the lack of "a quiet place to study" may be the biggest impediment to success for some students.

²⁰ The CCCCCO uses 8 hours within the term, but these figures report 8 hours within the academic year, a slightly more generous calculation.

The final table compares for 2004-05 the demographics of the 608 individuals who attended fewer than eight hours of instruction (and did not attend more than eight hours in any other year) to the Transitional Studies students initially identified in Table 1.

TABLE 16 – "DROP-IN" DEMOGRAPHICS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2004-05		Transitional Studies Students	Always Fewer than Eight Hours
Total Students		3,317	608
Age Group	16 - 19	29%	23%
	20 - 24	22%	24%
	25 - 29	12%	14%
	30 - 34	9%	11%
	35 - 39	7%	5%
	40 - 49	14%	14%
	50 Plus	7%	9%
Gender	Female	48%	50%
	Male	52%	50%
Ethnic Group	African American	17%	19%
	Asian	25%	23%
	Filipino	5%	5%
	Latino	41%	36%
	Native American	1%	1%
	Other Nonwhite	1%	2%
	Pacific Islander	2%	1%
	White	8%	12%

Subsequent investigation shows that 88% of the “always fewer than eight hours” individuals attend only one TRST section, usually for two hours. The largest group, 54%, attend hours in TRST 0039 and/or TRST 0036 only. TRST 0039 is ABE/Pre GED Preparation and TRST 0036 is a Reading/Writing Lab. Other individuals are scattered throughout various TRST sections. A negligible number (well under 1%) can be attributed to TRST 0038 which includes individuals seeking to take a GED practice examination.

V. REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In collecting and analyzing the data for this report, it became clear that there were a number of areas that could be explored further given more precise, or more complete, data. These topics, which present opportunities for further research, include:

Why have recent years seen a decrease in Transitional Studies enrollment?

The decrease in TRST student headcount enrollment is in part due to the temporary move of Mission campus. However, this cannot wholly explain the decreased enrollment, which has seen a drop across all TRST campuses. Undoubtedly part of the decrease is related to reduced summer course offerings—in Summer 2002, TRST offered 22 sections; in Summer 2004, only nine sections were offered. In addition, given the “feeder” relationship between ESL and TRST, recent downward trends in ESL enrollment may be affecting TRST enrollment.

How does the introduction of three instructional “levels” affect our understanding of TRST students’ abilities and growth?

In the past, a majority of TRST students’ skill levels could not be identified based on course enrollment as aligning with one of the three levels of instruction: beginning adult basic education (ABE), intermediate ABE or GED/high school diploma. In addition, placement assessments are not available to the Office of Research, Planning and Grants which would enable an identification students’ initial skill level. Without an accurate understanding of where students are starting out, it is impossible to ascertain intermediate success, or level advancement, which could reflect the work of the Transitional Studies Department and its students. As the quality of the “course level” data improves, more meaningful evaluations can be made regarding students’ ability to increase in level.

How do concurrent high school students perform in TRST courses?

We currently do not have a way to identify concurrent high school students within the general TRST population. This lack of data becomes problematic in particular when trying to track student success; concurrent high school students, if successful, receive diplomas from their individual high schools. Records of this information are not available at this time.

Why don’t more GED recipients continue on into CCSF credit programs?

Some of these completers may have successfully fulfilled their ambitions simply by earning the GED, an achievement that can be necessary for employment advancement. However, without complex and adequate goal assessment, it is impossible to determine how many students may wish to terminate their education with the GED. It is unclear at this time whether students may limit their aspirations unnecessarily and whether the College should actively encourage individual students to pursue credit or certificate programs.

Furthermore, many students who are close to completion of the GED stop out; this pattern suggests competing demands on student time, as well as perhaps a lack of focus or confidence. Information is not available at this time to determine whether the more linear curricular model of three skill levels will benefit or hinder this particular group of students who get so close to the completion of the GED.

What happens to the GED completers who do not continue into credit courses?

Since only one third of TRST GED completers move immediately into credit, a follow-up study might look at what happens to the other 64% of GED completers. Do these

students eventually enroll in credit (evidencing similar stop-out behavior along the way as was characteristic of their TRST enrollment)?

How can we better understand how TRST students perform in credit courses?

The data suggest that TRST students who do immediately enroll in credit perform relatively well in TRST-level courses (e.g., English K and L, Math E), but struggle more than new, first-time credit students with most other English and mathematics courses. One exception appears to be English 92 (but not English 90 or 94). This finding seems anomalous; trend data, looking at these patterns over time, would help in determining how genuine the actual differences in success may be.

Moreover, because the group of TRST GED completers enrolled in credit courses has been small thus far, it is difficult to do a nuanced comparison with all new, first-time students in order to see what differences or similarities the groups may exhibit. Future research could include an evaluation of TRST credit students and new, first-time students in terms of ethnicity, learning disabilities, and other factors that would help illuminate whether these two groups are truly comparable.

An additional desired comparison group is the CCSF High School Diploma completers. The Transitional Studies department has devised a HSD program which is designed to take students beyond the level of the GED, to give them more tools to help them succeed in future endeavors, such as enrolling in credit courses. Unfortunately, the data for this group is too recent to analyze.

What does a combined look at the qualitative and quantitative data in this report reveal about Transitional Studies?

It is clear from the Noncredit Student Survey and the multiple focus groups conducted with Transitional Studies faculty members that there is a great deal of enthusiasm and passion for, as well as dedication and commitment to, the TRST program. However, the quantitative data indicates that despite the fact that students and instructors are by and large happy with TRST, only a few TRST students coming out of the program with a GED are in fact prepared to enroll in college-level credit courses. Findings from this report suggest that the achievement of a GED, while a benchmark event in the lives of TRST students and their instructors, offers insufficient preparation for success in college-level courses.

APPENDIX

UNDERSTANDING DEPARTMENT LOAD FIGURES

Table A presents the Transitional Studies department load figure, which evaluates the department’s efficiency or “productivity” in generating state funding. Load is a particular income-to-expense ratio where income is generated by student attendance and expenses are incurred by paying faculty to teach the students. Student attendance is calculated using weekly student contact hours (WSCH), the figure that the College reports to the state in order to receive general funds. For noncredit courses, WSCH is directly derived from student attendance.²¹ The figure used for faculty is “full time equivalent,” or FTE. FTE corresponds to the number of faculty which would be required to teach the courses offered assuming a standard, full-time teaching load.

Load, then, is calculated by dividing the student number (WSCH) by the faculty number (FTE), and finally multiplying by a factor of 0.55 which is known as the “funding factor”. This factor represents the difference in the reimbursement rates, which is lower for noncredit than for credit. The fact that noncredit load appears to be lower than credit load overall is actually the result of the funding factor; the load figures in the next table should not be compared directly to credit number without bearing this in mind. Other aspects of costs, such as specific salaries or facilities costs, are not represented in these figures.

TABLE A - TRANSITIONAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT PRODUCTIVITY

	FTEs (Students)	WSCH (Students)	FTE (Faculty)	Transitional Studies Load (WSCH / FTE)	Transitional Studies "Average Class Size"	Overall Noncredit Load	Overall Noncredit "Average Class Size"
1998-99	627.39	18,821.30	48.16	214.94	15.6	315.07	22.9
1999-00	630.30	18,909.30	51.98	200.08	14.6	279.29	20.3
2000-01	619.34	18,580.40	57.14	178.85	13.0	275.91	20.1
2001-02	661.50	19,844.90	52.45	208.10	15.1	293.03	21.3
2002-03	738.95	22,168.90	56.03	217.61	15.8	287.58	20.9
2003-04	646.32	19,390.20	44.54	239.44	17.4	331.64	24.1
2004-05	523.10	15,693.00	43.06	200.44	14.6	314.86	22.9

Note: "Average Class Size" is actually the average number of students attending any given hour of instruction; it is not the number of students ever in that class. Given open-entry / open-exit, the latter would be higher.

Figures in Table A show that the Transitional Studies department is less “efficient” in terms of its load than noncredit overall. TRST efficiency reached a peak in 2003-04, as did noncredit in general. Note that FTEs (“Full Time Equivalent Students”) directly corresponds to the WSCH figure. FTEs is simply another way of looking at WSCH.

²¹ In noncredit, student attendance is recorded as positive attendance hours on PAR (“Positive Attendance Reporting”) sheets. These are totaled and massaged to generate the noncredit WSCH calculation. The credit calculation of WSCH utilizes student enrollment at one specific time during the semester.

The number of sections which the Transitional Studies department offered during this time period ranged from a high of 58 (Spring 2005) to fewer than ten during some Summer terms.

It is to be expected, however, that TRST load would be lower than noncredit as a whole; TRST is considered “basic skills” and as such is allowed to enroll fewer students than other noncredit departments and courses. Most noncredit courses are required to enroll 20 students. However, according to Article 18 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between AFT and SFCCD, Load and Class Size, basic skills classes such as those offered by TRST do not have to meet a 20 student minimum enrollment per class section. These are courses “for which smaller class size is deemed a valid educational requirement, for example, basic skills and classes for the disabled.”²² On average, TRST retains 15 students per class hour, compared to approximately 22 students in noncredit overall.

²² http://www.ccsf.edu/Offices/Employee_Relations/PDF/AFT2005-FINALContractWithIndex.pdf

TRANSITIONAL STUDIES COURSE LISTINGS

LEVEL 1—Beginning, Basic Instruction in Reading, Writing, Communicating & Mathematics

TRST 1200. Language Arts: Reading 1 (180 hrs)

Advise: ESL Level 7, TABE Level 4-6.5, CASAS 214-224

A beginning course designed to develop reading, critical thinking skills, and vocabulary development. Oral/written communication and computer literacy skills will also be developed.

TRST 1300. Vocabulary and Spelling (36-180 hrs)

Designed to increase vocabulary and improve spelling skills. Some basic grammar included.

Formerly ABE 2003.

TRST 1301. Language Arts: Writing 1 (180 hrs)

Advise: ESL Level 7, TABE Level 4-6.5, CASAS 214-224

This is a beginning course in paragraph/essay writing. Emphasis is on sentence mechanics. Oral communication, reading, and computer literacy skills will also be developed.

TRST 1400. Math Skills Development 1 (36-180 hrs)

Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers and their application to everyday situations. Introduction to number theory, measurement, basic geometry, and elementary algebra.

Formerly ABE 2070.

LEVEL II—Intermediate Instruction in Reading, Writing, Communicating & Mathematics

TRST 2200. Language Arts Reading/Writing 2 (180 hrs)

Advise: [TRST 1200](#) and/or [TRST 1301](#), CASAS 225-230, TABE 7-9

Language arts competencies developed through listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Using literature, and media, students explore American culture(s) and society. Reading, writing and basic computer competencies are stressed.

TRST 2201. Language Arts Reading/Writing 2.5 (90 hrs)

Advise: [TRST 1200](#) and/or [TRST 1301](#), CASAS 225-230, TABE 7-9

Language arts competencies developed through writing, and reading. Using literature, and media, students explore American culture(s) and society. Reading and writing competencies are stressed.

TRST 2400. Math Skills Development 2 (36-180 hrs)

Study of decimal and common fractions, percents, basic algebra and geometry.

Applications with measurement, graphic representations and development of critical

thinking through word problems in functional contexts. Competency based.
Formerly ABE 2071.

TRST 2500. Career and Personal Income Management (90 hrs)

Advise: CASAS score of 225

Career awareness, job search, and job retention. Employment development and income management. Emphasizes necessary reading, oral and written communication, workability, and interpersonal skills needed to become and stay employable. SCANS competencies are integrated into the curriculum. Satisfies high school requirement in Career Awareness.

Formerly HSCA 2150.

LEVEL III—Advanced classes in reading, writing, communicating, mathematics and critical thinking in specific High School subjects. Required coursework for the City College of San Francisco High School Diploma Program. Courses also prepare students for subject matter examinations on the GED and for transfer to credit.

TRST 3300. Literature and Composition (90 hrs)

Advise: [TRST 2200](#) or placement into [TRST 3300](#)

Students interpret, analyze, and respond to multi-cultural literature, art, and media. Students develop awareness of their own ideological framework and writing style, strengthening their writing, editing, and critical thinking skills.

TRST 3401. Beginning Algebra (90 hrs)

A first course in algebra: expressions and variables, polynomials, and rational expressions; exponents and roots; linear, absolute value, and quadratic equations; systems of linear equations; functions and their graphs; applications.

Formerly ASE 3001.

TRST 3500. U.S. History 1 (90 hrs)

Advise: TRST 2200

U.S. History up to the Civil War, emphasizing the influence of past events on the present. Analysis of historical cause and effect from political, social, and economic viewpoints.

Formerly HSHI 2351.

TRST 3501. U.S. History 2 (90 hrs)

Advise: TRST 2200

History of post Civil War America, emphasizing the influence of past events on the present. Analysis of historical cause and effect from political, social, and economic viewpoints.

Formerly HSHI 2352.

TRST 3502. Civics (54-90 hrs)²³

The Constitution, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, elections, and the party system. Introduces students to a practical understanding of the law.
Formerly HSCI 2204.

TRST 3503. Economics (54-90 hrs)²⁴

Basic economic principles and their applications to the free enterprise system. Economic concepts applied to students' personal financial decisions.
Formerly HSEC 2225.

TRST 3504. Physical Science 1 (54-180 hrs)

Study of how people are influenced by the physical world. Includes climate, the ocean, natural events, natural resources, the earth's relationship to the sun and moon, and the effects of population on the earth. Current events analyzed using course concepts.
Formerly HSSC 2565.

TRST 3505. Focus on the Future (30-180 hrs)

Course is divided into six flexible modules emphasizing developing skills for success in academic and vocational pursuits. Students will explore the world of work as well as the world of higher education. They will have opportunities to shadow college students or workers in business and industry. Selected students may apply for internships. Appropriate for all students returning to school. Modules components may be offered separately.
Formerly ASE 2085.

VOCATIONAL—Prepare for Employment, Entry Into Job Training Programs, or Further College Study

TRST 4600. Pre-Vocational Foundation Skills (45-90 hrs)

A competency based course focusing on the basic skills and personal qualities needed to succeed in the entry-level workplace. May be offered bilingually in Spanish and/or in other languages.
Formerly ABEV 2089.

TRST 4601. On the Job Communication Skills (54-180 hrs)

Listening and responding skills and other interpersonal communication skills needed for success on the job. Includes resume writing and interview practice, and introduction to on the job work standards and employer expectations. Special emphasis on the hospitality industry.
Formerly ABEV 2074.

TRST 4602. Literacy Tutor Training (12 hrs)

Provides instructional techniques in basic reading and writing including demonstration

²³ All Level 3 courses will be listed as “90 hrs” in the 2006-07 catalog. This information is from the 2005-06 catalog.

²⁴ All Level 3 courses will be listed as “90 hrs” in the 2006-07 catalog. This information is from the 2005-06 catalog.

and practice. Includes student assessment, progress evaluation and choosing instructional materials. Designed for volunteers and paraprofessionals who will be tutoring adult students in literacy skills.

Formerly ABEV 2090.

TRST 4603. Graphic Arts Academics (36-180 hrs)

Academic and vocational instruction that offers a study of mathematics, science and vocabulary as it relates to the field of graphic communications. Prepares students for entry into the Graphic Communications program.

Formerly ABEV 2091.

TRST 4604. Vocational Foundation Skills (36-180 hrs)

Competency-based course designed to support student academic success in vocational programs. Focus is on the foundation skills for reading, writing, math and study skills. Course may be repeated.

Formerly ABEV 2092.

Transitional Studies Students Enrolled by Campus

		Gough				John Adams				Mission				Southeast			
		1998-99	2000-01	2002-03	2004-05	1998-99	2000-01	2002-03	2004-05	1998-99	2000-01	2002-03	2004-05	1998-99	2000-01	2002-03	2004-05
Total Students		700	725	820	768	1,722	1,665	1,785	1,255	1,134	1,341	1,587	862	413	231	438	323
Age Group	16 - 19	9%	12%	11%	10%	38%	50%	44%	55%	15%	14%	9%	9%	30%	22%	21%	16%
	20 - 24	21%	15%	20%	20%	21%	18%	22%	23%	26%	26%	25%	24%	29%	24%	27%	23%
	Subtotal 16-24	30%	27%	31%	30%	60%	68%	66%	78%	41%	39%	34%	34%	59%	46%	48%	38%
	25 - 29	15%	13%	14%	15%	10%	8%	8%	6%	17%	18%	20%	17%	12%	13%	15%	11%
	30 - 34	13%	14%	14%	10%	7%	5%	5%	5%	16%	15%	15%	14%	7%	11%	10%	10%
	35 - 39	12%	16%	9%	10%	7%	5%	5%	2%	10%	11%	10%	11%	7%	8%	10%	11%
	40 - 49	17%	19%	20%	21%	9%	7%	9%	6%	10%	11%	14%	17%	9%	14%	13%	20%
	50 Plus	12%	11%	12%	13%	7%	7%	7%	3%	5%	5%	7%	7%	5%	7%	4%	10%
Gender	Female	49%	47%	49%	51%	53%	48%	47%	46%	50%	45%	45%	45%	53%	63%	56%	57%
	Male	51%	53%	51%	49%	47%	52%	53%	54%	50%	55%	55%	55%	47%	37%	44%	43%
Ethnic Group	African American	46%	40%	40%	39%	27%	30%	30%	25%	3%	1%	3%	3%	69%	63%	65%	56%
	Asian	11%	13%	12%	10%	27%	26%	25%	29%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%	8%	11%	13%
	Filipino	6%	5%	6%	7%	7%	6%	8%	8%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	4%
	Latino	21%	23%	21%	22%	20%	20%	22%	25%	92%	93%	91%	89%	15%	15%	8%	15%
	Native American	1%	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Other	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	Pacific Islander	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	7%	11%	4%
	White	14%	16%	16%	17%	15%	14%	11%	8%	2%	2%	3%	3%	5%	5%	3%	5%

ATTENDANCE PATTERNS

Hours, Sections of Attended within Year

		1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Hours Attended	Median Hours	44	42	42	43	42	43	44
	Mean Hours	79	75	80	79	79	84	86
	Maximum Hours	1,050	1,122	1,475	1,463	1,262	1,454	1,783
Sections	Median Sections	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Mean Sections	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.6
	Maximum Sections	26	15	16	16	23	18	19

Mean is the statistical average.

Median is the "line" at which 50% of the population lies below and 50% lies above.

Maximum is the largest number achieved.

Hours by Quartile

Percent of Students Attending up to X Number of Hours	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
25% of students	18 hrs	19	19	19	18	18	20
50% of students	44 hrs	42	42	43	42	43	44
75% of students	102 hrs	93	96	95	94	96	98
90% of students	185 hrs	170	188	190	188	207	215
100% of students	1,050 hrs	1,122	1,475	1,463	1,262	1,454	1,783

E.g., in 2004-05, 25% of students attended for 20 hours or less, 50% of students attended for 44 hours or less, 75% of students attended for 98 hours or less, 90% of students attended for 215 hours or less, and no one attended for more than 1,783 hours.

Hours Attended as a Percentage of Maximum Possible for Enrolled Courses

Proportion of Hours Attended	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
25% of students	4%	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
50% of students	10%	11%	13%	13%	13%	13%	16%
75% of students	21%	25%	31%	29%	30%	32%	38%
90% of students	42%	55%	58%	55%	58%	61%	68%

TRANSITIONAL STUDIES FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Please give us a portrait of the kinds of students in your classes. What are their backgrounds as you have come to know them?
2. What goals do students have when they come into your program? Based on your experience, why do you think some students are able to achieve those goals and others are not? Can you identify factors that either help or hinder student success?
3. Do your students, in general, stay for the entire term? Do you have a sense of why some stay and others leave?
4. Are students who transition from the ESL program adequately prepared to succeed in your class?
5. What kinds of support systems are available to students to help them succeed academically? Do these support systems work? If not, how could they be improved?
6. What are the major strengths of the Transitional Studies program at your campus? If you could improve one aspect of the program, what would you choose?

Participants

Sharyn Zoll, Focus on the Future and Civics

Kate Gougoutas, Career and Income Management and Student Orientation

Amber Strauss, English (concurrent high school students)

Additionally, Herb Silverman, who could not be present during the focus group, submitted two pages of written comments responding to the focus group questions

Student Portraits

In general, most students fall into the range of 18-24 years old, with some younger students in the concurrent high school program and a sprinkling of older students as well. These students are diverse in terms of their ethnic background; faculty members have observed, however, a decrease in the number of African-American students and an increase in the number of Southeast Asian students. Quite a few of these students are either first generation or “1.5” generation: while they are orally proficient in English, their reading and writing skills are lacking.

Focus group participants describe their students as “not kids, but not adults.” Students often characterize themselves as “bad,” and blame themselves for their lack of academic success. Many students also may have legal troubles, problems with acting out, and significant family responsibilities, including parenthood. They are in need of comprehensive support services, including childcare, help with part-time jobs, assistance negotiating the legal system, and mentorship. Many are on general assistance or welfare, especially those who are parents. Indeed, one participant characterizes her students as “the neediest of the needy.”

Student Goals

Focus group participants observe that many of their students enroll in Transitional Studies to achieve either a GED or a high school diploma, which have both psychological and job-related benefits for them. Older students tend to be focused on GED achievements. Concurrently enrolled high school students are juniors and seniors who are unable to complete the credits they need to graduate and attend Transitional Studies courses in order to transfer credits back to their high school. Some students, however, show up simply to get the appropriate papers signed to meet their general assistance requirements; these students are often never seen in class for the rest of the term.

Many students believe that the achievement of a GED or high school diploma will allow them the opportunity for better employment, especially when combined with further education in credit courses on CCSF’s main campus. Many vocational programs, for example, require a GED or high school diploma, and students in trade occupations cannot reach journeyman level without a GED.

Additional psychological reasons also motivate students towards a high school diploma or GED. Many feel it is important to simply have the piece of paper, both for themselves and for their family members. Students make a distinction between the GED and the

high school diploma; many feel, due to their particular social worlds or families, that having the diploma is very important. One participant notes that the high school diploma is particularly valued in the Pacific Islander community, especially for those students who travel back and forth to Samoa, China, and other countries.

Participants note that despite these articulated academic goals, students tend to have a limited vision for themselves; they may want a diploma, but not know for what purpose. One participant describes, “Many have not had the experience of putting much in their “reserve tanks” in order to believe that tomorrow is going to bring a whole lot.” Another participant describes the students as being in “survival mode.” In general, students also have difficulty making long-term plans and have more success with smaller, more “do-able” steps.

The course Focus on the Future helps students take these small steps in order to get them into credit classes on the main CCSF campus. The class addresses study skills, self exploration, observing classes of interest, tours of the main campus, and encouragement in thinking about careers instead of just jobs. Students leave the class with a plan for the future; approximately 90% intend to go on to credit courses at the main campus. The latest semester of Focus on the Future has had an extremely high success rate: out of 31 students starting in the class, 29 completed it.

Another offering that helps students achieve their goal of eventually transferring to credit classes on the main campus is the *Steps to Credit* workshop. One participant notes that many CCSF students are unable to enroll in the credit classes they need due to impactation; through this course, John Adams students are able to take placement tests on the John Adams campus and receive priority registration for credit classes. *Steps to Credit* has been run by the Counseling Department for several years. Students attend an orientation with a counselor who explains the credit system, take a placement test at John Adams, create a preliminary schedule for the next semester, and go through additional steps at the main campus. One participant suggests that the more Transitional Studies students get to the main campus and feel comfortable there, the more they will succeed in credit courses.

Retention

Focus group participants report that retention can be a struggle at John Adams; as one describes, “In order to get 20 students, you need to enroll 40.” However, participants also note that once the students who don’t show up or those who attend only one class have been discounted, retention rates depend a lot on the teacher. A high-quality teacher, they estimate, will hold onto 75-80% of his or her students.

Many students face personal problems that inhibit their ability to continue in a particular class. For example, many students are involved with the court system, and court-mandated meetings and probation requirements can often disrupt a class. However, a sense of community in the classroom, such as the feeling that students will be missed if they don’t come back, helps increase retention. One participant notes, “When a class is working, it can override students’ personal problems.”

Participants describe this kind of class that “works” as including collaborative, democratically-based work and decision-making, with students thinking and analyzing together around project-based learning. Participants describe students as confident and

engaged when given hands-on activities; a formal academic style, on the other hand, can be like a foreign language to them. Students also enjoy group work where they can learn in an interactive manner. This work style allows students to demonstrate their particular strengths, such as group facilitation.

Building a sense of community among concurrent high school students can entail some additional challenges. These students tend to be strongly identified by their high schools and their neighborhoods. They also invest greatly in the idea of being “tough” and having “street cred,” including some who have gang affiliations. One participant notes that it is important to work up to group activities slowly with these students, giving the class an opportunity to bond.

In addition, participants describe the open entry/exit as a complicating factor, since getting credit for high school classes is based on “seat time.” One participant also spoke out strongly against open entry/exit, describing that young people need boundaries that are set and enforced, such as a limited number of absences after which a student is not allowed back in the class.

Curriculum Redesign

Participants describe the increased rigor that has been built into the Transitional Studies high school diploma curriculum as a result of the curriculum redesign. One participant observes that students appreciate high expectations as long teachers don’t scare them. Another notes that under the old curriculum, students may not have had a lot of success when moving into credit courses. At this time, many students place into Math E when moving from Transitional Studies to credit courses. However, under the new curriculum, students are expected to enter into Math 840 and English 96. One participant predicts a divide between Transitional Studies students who complete the redesigned curriculum and those who graduated previously.

Support Systems

Focus group participants cite the library staff as being an important support resource for John Adams students. The library staff are described as “wonderful,” helping students with research and projects as well as bringing in speakers to enhance the campus culture.

Participants describe connections to DSPTS as improving at John Adams; a DSPTS instructor comes to each orientation and invites students to visit him. Since attending orientation, the instructor reports meeting with three new students each week. However, participants note that they don’t have any way of finding out if students have learning disabilities except what the students themselves report, many of whom have been previously labeled as ADHD. Often faculty members have hunches about students who may have learning disabilities, and estimate learning disability rates among Transitional Studies students as higher than the rest of the CCSF student population. One participant believes from 30-40% of her students have learning disabilities.

Participants report mixed results from counseling services, which has received cuts to its hours. A career counselor is available to students, but at times does not quite tap into the students’ strengths and is not available for enough hours. The New and Continuing Counseling departments struggle to coordinate internally and keep accurate records; one participant reports that she must keep a copy of everything herself. One challenge is that

the counseling records to date have not been computerized. Another participant describes that 10% of her students do not receive their grades and that often students do not receive accurate information about SFSU and CSU transferable classes. Students also get mixed information about how many HS credits they have, and the department does not track the number of students that are enrolled in each class. In addition, at times ensuring communication between counselors is a challenge.

Strengths/Weaknesses

The Transitional Studies Department at the John Adams campus faces a number of challenges. One difficulty is that non-credit students cannot be asked to buy books for their classes, so John Adams has to bear the cost of all classroom supplies and materials. Another issue is the small pool of full-time faculty, only five including the department chair. These full-time faculty members must be on every committee and attend every hiring interview, making it difficult to hold office hours and attend to other key responsibilities. Focus group participants would like to find a way for part-time faculty members to invest more in the department, perhaps through staff development.

In addition, participants suggest having a faculty advisor for their students, similar to the one the ESL Department provides, who would be able to meet with students and perform transcript analysis. Another proposed idea includes having a single counselor in charge of high school students to act as their advocate, and a counselor on the main campus to work with Transitional Studies students.

Participants note that data from the CASAS testing is not useful to them. While the test offers a ballpark figure about the classes into which students should enroll, participants experience many problems with students who are not accurately placed. This kind of erroneous placement can set students up for failure.

In terms of strengths, one faculty member wrote “we can be more involved with the students. We can work one on one or in small groups. We can have smaller classes and it’s more informal.”

Transitional Studies Focus Group
Mission Campus, May 2005

Participants

Salvador Alvarado
Rene Ayala
Elsa Mayorga
Julita McNichol
Maria Rosales-Uribe

Student Portraits

Faculty describe more than half their students as being at what they call the “basic skills level”. Generally these students are immigrants, although some have been in the U.S. for a period of years. Many originally come from the Yucatan Peninsula and place a high value on education. Typically they enter the U.S. with the equivalent of a third grade education. One sub-set of this group are women, some of whom may be seeking an education in order to leave a controlling or abusive environment.

The second largest group (until recently, the largest group) are younger students who are progressing in their ESL classes but have gaps in their education such as Math skills or Writing skills—gaps they need to eliminate in order to get their GED. These students are well motivated and tend to be successful. A related group are students referred to by some faculty as “shoo-ins”. These are students who need to present a GED certificate to retain their jobs but already have the requisite skills. They attend for one semester or less.

Other students are those mandated by social programs or corrections. Corrections has recently begun referring students to Mission Campus. This population is expected to grow and has the potential to exacerbate gang-related issues. (See next section.)

Students referred by General Assistance are described as having low attendance and strong attitudes toward school. Many simply want faculty to sign the required paperwork so they can show GA that they have complied—however most do not comply sufficiently and faculty refuse. These students often bounce between campuses, trying one set of faculty, then another. Mission Campus has adopted a policy of referring these students to John Adams or ALTC at Gough Street which is described as better equipped to work with them.

Beginning Fall 2005, the campus will add High School credit classes and hopes to attract concurrent high school students as well as recent drops outs and/or those students a few credits short of their high school requirements.

Student Goals

Most students are described as having an immediate goal of GED, often for job-related reasons. Sometimes parents enroll to increase their skills in order to help their children, particularly in math. Faculty indicated that as students persist in their studies, that they become more focused on the skills than on the credentials. Many want to transition to credit classes but for some, residency presents a barrier.

Campus Move

Faculty expressed some frustration with the recent campus move. They indicated that enrollment has declined significantly because students find it difficult to get to the new location, and also many students are uncomfortable in the new location. The shift toward an older student population may be partially a result of the Mission Campus move from one location in the Outer Mission to the Inner Mission. There is a feeling among faculty that some students may be afraid to attend the new location which is believed by faculty and students to be on “neutral territory”. Such “neutral territory” allows the campus to draw from rival gangs creating the potential for violent conflict. Faculty requested some professional development regarding these concerns.

Spanish-Speaking

Many students are Spanish-speaking and classes are taught bilingually, however faculty are quick to point out that they are also qualified to teach in English. So far, though, they have not had a sufficient number of monolingual students to maintain course enrollments. However, the upcoming High School diploma program has the potential to change that. Currently the faculty are prepared to teach the “first two layers” in English and Spanish.

Support Systems

Faculty described the lack of full time positions (only two currently) as a problem. Students need lots of individual attention. Full time faculty have more time to help both with instructional and related issues. In the past, for example, faculty have volunteered time to sponsor a variety of workshops (e.g., HIV) and job fairs.

Additional support services are needed for students who may be struggling with finances, childcare, and domestic abuse. Some monetary support is offered for GED test takers (which costs \$75); students who attend classes regularly can take the GED at a reduced cost. Some students simply need a safe, quiet location to study. There is one DSPS counselor, but more services are needed for some students who have emotional problems. Additionally, educational planning and career link counseling is needed. A Focus on the Future type course is in planning stages, but there is also a desire for a faculty advisor.

Program Strengths and Weaknesses

The program needs more financial support for readers and textbooks. Faculty have worked to develop materials because those published in Spanish are often poorly translated.

Other weaknesses cited: currently the program attracts students by word of mouth; the campus would like to advertise its programs. Faculty would like some articulation with the Latino Services Network which currently serves primarily (only?) credit students. An additional challenge is that students, particularly those from Newcomer and Downtown High, have graduated from high school but continue to lack basic skills.

Faculty listed a number of strengths they perceive in the Mission Campus programs: dedication of teachers, orientation toward service, encouragement of all students, provision of a bridge via bilingual instruction. Another strength is that faculty are equipped to teach a wide variety of subjects. Faculty are motivated by a belief that affecting this generation will affect future generations.

Transitional Studies Focus Group
Gough Street Campus, May 2005

Participants

Tim Weldon
Vicky Weisan
Val Habegger
Diane Fredericks

Student Portraits

Participants in the Gough Street focus group describe their students as an extremely diverse group, both in terms of ages and ethnicities. While the majority of students at Gough Street may be older than at other Transitional Studies sites, they range from 18 years old to 75 years old. Students come from a variety of educational and economic backgrounds, but for the most part they have grown up and been educated in the United States and have not completed their education. Many feel that they don't have the educational skills to make it in the world, perhaps having tried to get jobs and failed, or realized that they are unable to complete their GED. Some students in fact feel that they are lacking something basic necessary for survival, such as the ability to read and understand.

Participants note that students are often extremely hard on themselves and are weighed down by emotional baggage over earlier failures as well as years of negative feedback that they have internalized. Some consider themselves "slow" or incapable of learning; however, many of these students seem instead to have learning disorders. Participants have observed students who are bright but unable to express themselves in writing and note that while these students most likely have dyslexia, they have accepted others' assessment that they are simply not smart enough. Many students also assess themselves at a lower skill level than the one at which they really are, such as commenting that they "can't read a word." In general, students tend to be weakest in the areas of writing and math.

Gough Street offers both day and evening programs, and participants observe that the student population is split fairly evenly between the two. Night students tend to be employed, many at places such as Walgreen's or Starbucks or in the custodial field. Day students tend not to work at all or work only minimally, perhaps because they had difficulty handling the job or suffered an injury. Participants point out that some students are medically indigent and face challenges in receiving even basic care, such as being able to afford glasses.

Finally, participants point out that most Transitional Studies students don't consider themselves part of CCSF as a whole. They make a strong distinction between credit and non-credit courses, as well as degree programs and non-degree programs.

Student Goals

Receiving their GED is a primary goal for many students at Gough Street, for a variety of personal and professional reasons. Many students feel that having a GED will allow them access to better employment opportunities. For example, students must have a high

school diploma if they wish to enter the military, and some are prevented from moving up in their jobs without the GED. Some students begin with the goal of receiving a GED but experience an evolution in their thought process as their education continues. One participant cites a student who wished to receive her GED in order to become a bus driver; now that she is close to that goal, she is considering taking credit courses on the Ocean Campus and working towards an Associate's Degree.

For many, however, the GED represents a personal milestone and validation that they are on the same level as the general public. Many students want to set a positive example for their children and grandchildren and feel that receiving the GED is a point of self-esteem. In fact, even though students are told that they can enroll in credit courses without a GED, many refuse to do so, wanting to achieve their goal before moving on. While this focus on the GED may be technically unnecessary for some in terms of educational achievement, participants point out that focusing on the GED also allows students to develop the skills they need to succeed in credit courses.

Retention

Student retention can be a challenge at Gough Street. In each class, participants estimate a core group of 10-15 students who come regularly and stay over a long period of time. Many of these students enjoy the program and have the self-discipline to continue coming to class even when their personal life is not going well. These students also thrive under the individual attention they receive in their Transitional Studies classes.

Other students, however, have difficulty sticking with the program. Participants note that challenges of childcare, emotional problems, and general life upheavals can take students away from class. Some of these students consider themselves to be motivated, but in fact are not. Many come to class and feel overwhelmed and frightened that the class is too hard; even when this is not true, these students can be prone to dropping out.

In addition, many students do not realize how long it will take for them to reach their goals, and how difficult that path will be. Some students come into the program having already scheduled their GED test for the following month, while in fact they are far behind on the necessary skills. For many, even achieving the GED in a year's time is simply not possible. One participant describes his efforts to encourage one student to keep her long-term goals in mind amidst questions such as, "Should I stay here? Am I getting there? How long will this take? Should I get a job?"

ESL Students

Participants report that there are some students in their classes who come from the ESL program, primarily at Level 7 or Level 8. Some have speaking skills but need to develop their reading and writing skills. These students enjoy hearing so much English spoken, an environment that is different from their ESL courses. Many understand English well, with some having been in the country for many years, but have poor academic skills. In addition, while a few students are highly skilled in their native language, most are not.

Student Support

One key source of student support is a counselor with an MFCC degree who visits the campus once a week to talk with students. One participant comments that she refers students to the counselor when she is unable to move them forward academically and

they need additional help or if they are experiencing emotional traumas. In addition, several instructors work as reading specialists who do diagnostic advising, and one of the participants has been trained to work with dyslexic students.

Participants point out that connecting students to credit courses is an area where additional support is needed. Students who in the past were taken on tours of the main Ocean campus were able to reduce their fear simply by seeing where registration takes place and being able to find the learning center. Participants would like to start this practice again, as Transitional Studies students experience a lot of stress about moving into credit courses.

Open Entry/Exit Instruction

Participants describe that with the open entry/exit system, students arrive in class throughout the term, not clumped in any particular way. In order to teach successfully under this system, instructors often construct each lesson as a self-contained unit. While the lesson might refer to previous work, it doesn't have to. A "building block" approach is impractical for open entry/exit, as new students are constantly entering the class with many different skills.

Participants note that math classes feature mostly individual work. Students complete an in-take to evaluate where they should begin, but after that the work is primarily self-paced with occasional input from the instructor. Classes use "number power" books or other printed materials that allow students to move quickly through the material. Participants also point out that math is a subject that often proves most difficult for students to conquer.

Strengths/Weaknesses

Participants describe the students themselves as one of the greatest strengths of the Transitional Studies program at Gough Street. The students in general leave class happy and excited and are helpful and supportive of each other across all lines of age, race, and gender. One participant describes her students as able to analyze problems in a practical way, behaving very graciously towards one another. Another participant points out that students will help each other with conflict, offering a different perspective from that of an instructor. Participants note a lack of competitiveness as well. While at times there are disruptive students who cause classroom management issues, as a whole the students are seen as a very positive element of the program.

When discussing weaknesses of the program, participants express a desire for more classroom resources, such as a book budget. One participant pays for her own books, and others agree that anything purchased for the class must come out of personal funds. Participants point out that reading a photocopy of a book is not the same experience as reading a book itself.

Staffing is another challenge for the Gough Street Transitional Studies program. While many wonderful people come to work as school aids, most leave for better offers such as teaching in credit English or working full-time for Americorps. Filling the vacancy takes at least a semester, and many vacancies are simply not filled. Participants express frustration with the length of time it takes to get budgets signed and everything put into place.

The Role of Data

Participants were asked to consider how additional data about their program might be of assistance. Participants suggested that qualitative data could be helpful to them, such as interviews or focus groups with students. Participants were interested in learning from students whether classes were meeting the appropriate number of times per week, whether students are getting what they need, what works for them, what doesn't work, and what they would like to see more of. Some participants were interested in learning more about students who had left the program, while others considered it more important to focus on the students who remain.

Upon entry into the program, students are tested regarding comprehension and decoding using the WRAT test and others from Stanford. These tests are perceived to be fairly accurate, particularly around the balance between comprehension and technical skills. Participants note as that they have a significant amount of quantitative data about students on topics such as reading level improvement, but this information is not computerized. Finally, participants point out that the CASAS test doesn't offer them a lot of relevant information about their students.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE NONCREDIT SURVEY TRST RESPONSES -- END COMMENTS

I like my teacher(s) because they are

- Encouraging (5) /Kind, understanding, supportive (3)
- Highly qualified (4);
- Helpful, (6); Clear/ helps me understand (4)

Other positive teacher qualities noted: fair, friendly, patient, interesting, intelligent, strict (positive), respectful, guiding, energetic, humorous.

Teaching methods and class content interesting, motivating (9) Boring (1)

Like the pair and group activities (3)

Like using a calculator for math (1)

Teachers need to let students work at own pace (1); they do let students work at own pace (1)

Should assign homework (1); these classes are good preparation for university/not that different from credit (2)

I can notice the improvement in my skills/ my English/ my confidence (9)

Classmates are nice, respect one another, not disruptive, have chance to make friends (4)

Class hours are convenient (4)

Class hours are inconvenient (4)

Classes need ought to be 5 days a week (4); Three days a week is preferable (3)

Need more vocational/computer programs (2)

Most important is that the classes are free (5)

I like that it's on a college campus (1)

Campus is neat and clean (4); don't like graffiti in restrooms (1)

Looking forward to the new campus (2)

Campus needs to have pay phones. (2)

Campus is near (1) / far (1) from my house.

No student parking (1) /Access to public transportation is good (2)

This class is a second chance for me (2)

Student Services

A&E needs to give needed information, be more available (not talking on cell phone or eating). Needs to be nicer, more patient (2)

Like availability of counselor (1) / counselors too busy (1)

Counselor needs to keep better records (1); counselor needs to give full/correct information (2)

Want more information on other noncredit offerings / want information from the start about GED classes available at campus (3)