Summer Boot Camp to Prepare Athletes for Fall Enrollment
Student Equity C-4

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Overview
When you are referring to the data from this report, please remember to acknowledge that it was done through the Mt. SAC Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness. The following report is only possible through the assistance provided by the School of Continuing Education and WIN, specifically Madelyn Arballo and Erica Ledezma.

Executive Summary
Two researchers from the Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness examined the 2015-2016 Student Equity Plan’s Summer Boot Camp to Prepare Athletes for Fall Enrollment project. Quantitative data analysis and focus groups were performed. This report only addresses the qualitative data. The participants of the two focus groups consisted of nine students who participated in the boot camp and were selected based on convenience and student availability. The focus groups were held in a WIN classroom. The purpose of the focus groups were to examine the boot camp and post-boot camp experiences. Five key recommendations for the summer boot camp and post-boot camp experience resulted.

Student Equity Plan Summary
The Target Student Group and Activity Implementation descriptions within this section are copies of the corresponding sections in the 2015-2016 Mt. SAC Student Equity Report and are indicated as such with italics. These research projects focus on examining the underlined excerpts.

Target Student Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Student Population(s)</th>
<th># of Students Affected</th>
<th>Goal (list specific # or % of the goal to be achieved)</th>
<th>Goal Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incoming freshman student athletes from the following groups: Latinos, especially males,</td>
<td>300 Estimate</td>
<td>1. At least 70% of student athletes attending a boot camp will pass their English courses and at least 60% will pass math courses (C or better).</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans, especially males,</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. 70% of student athletes who attend boot camp sessions will enroll in Math or English courses in the subsequent Fall Semester.</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Pacific Islanders, both males and females</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. At least 70% of those who attended a boot camps will participate in at least 3 interventions per semester (tutoring, advising, and workshops).</td>
<td>2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity Implementation
This is a continuation of the previous year’s Student Equity project that aimed to provide student support and follow-up to incoming freshmen student athletes who attended summer English and math boot camps. This year’s activities will include counseling services (orientation, educational planning, and follow-up) and tracking of student progress. These

1 http://www.mtsac.edu/governance/committees/equity/pdf/FinalStudentEquityPlan.pdf
activities will serve in combination to promote successful basic skills course completion and progression in the English and math sequence.

*During the summer session, when incoming students take the boot camp, the counselor will ensure that students have attended an orientation and complete an educational plan. One of the main activities of the counselor is to assist boot camp attendees enrolling in math or English courses during Fall and Spring semesters. Counselors will also refer students to tutoring if educational deficiencies still exist.*

*In Fall 2016 and Spring 2017, the project program specialist will track boot camp attendees’ course completion and progression through the basic skills sequence, monitor progress reports required of student athletes, and make referrals to counselors and tutors. Students with deficient progress reports will be referred to attend intervention workshops provided by the counselor.*
Qualitative Research: Focus Groups

Purpose of this Research Study
The purpose of the qualitative component of this research study, utilizing focus groups, is to examine the boot camp and post-boot camp experiences of Nio College student athletes who participated in boot camp during summer 2015.

Methods

Participants
The focus groups consisted of student athletes officially recognized by and enrolled at Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) who participated in the summer boot camp for athletes. A total of nine students participated. The sample was predominately male. Some of the students participated in the summer 2015 boot camp during their second academic year. The ethnicity, cultural background, and age of the focus group participants were not collected; however, observations were made.

Research Design
This research is non-experimental, the sample is non-representative and non-stratified, and utilizes a cross-sectional approach. The outreach and organization of the participants was conducted by Adult Basic Education Project Program Specialist, Erica Ledezma. The focus group was administered by Mt. SAC Research and Institutional Effectiveness researcher, Elizabeth Bogumil. Five guiding themes, created from the project’s Activity Implementation description, were used during questioning:

1. Summer boot camp experience
2. General experiences post-boot camp
3. Counseling experiences
4. Workshop experiences
5. Is there any further information you would like to share?

Procedures
Students who participated in the summer 2015 boot camp for athletes were asked to participate in the focus group; participation was voluntary. Pizza was provided for the students after they participated. The focus group was administered by Mt. SAC Research and Institutional Effectiveness researcher, Elizabeth Bogumil. The focus groups occurred in a classroom in the WIN building on May 23, 2016 and May 24, 2016 from 12:00 PM to 12:30 PM. Both focus groups were audio recorded.

Limitations
Both focus groups appeared to consist of diverse students and visible minorities but demographics are only based on observation due to the nature of focus group research.

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2 As indicated in this particular student equity plan.
Additionally, the focus group participants were selected based on convenience and availability. Furthermore, as some of the student’s participate in the summer 2015 boot camp during their sophomore year, the results may not be exclusively generalizable to incoming students first academic year experiences.

**Results**

**Overview of Participants**
Participants generally consisted of visible minorities. There appeared to be one African American male, a few Pacific Islander male and females, and Latino and Latina participants. Only a few students had participated in the boot camp as first year students. Many students had participated as second year students. A majority of those who participated as second year students were either graduating with their Associates Degree or had been accepted for transfer to a 4-year university.

Repeated comments in bold and key words underscored (coach, workshop, and counselor). Quotes have been edited for clarity. The raw survey responses are available upon request.

**Describe your boot camp experience.**

- The coaches encourages many students to attend the summer boot camp – some even presented consequences for not attending.
- Boot camp was worth it.
- The boot camp experience was productive and helpful but was also boring.
- The teacher’s enthusiasm can spread - willingness to work one-on-one and use engaging activities is important.
- The boot camp tutor should make the students feel comfortable asking questions.
- The length of boot camp and the duration of sessions was good.
- “I feel like for my sport, not a lot of people knew about the boot camp or what it was for. I feel like they thought it was just another workshop.”
- When discussing how their coach introduced boot camp: “Raise your hand if you’re in these particular classes. I’m passing around a sheet and you’re all signing up for boot camp. If you don’t go, you’re running.”
- “Pretty much every day after practice...our coach told us if you need to test out of any classes or need help, there is a boot camp to enroll in.”
- “It was like a refresher – helping me remember some things I really didn’t remember before.”
- “For me, I placed really low, my friend took me to the WIN and that is where I talked to Erica and she recommended [the boot camp].”
- “I enjoyed the boot camp because it was one-on-one with a person that will actually help you. The one-on-one interaction was a big deal.”
- “One-on-one help was very enthusiastic from teachers but, as a group, it wasn’t involved.”
- “My coach kept saying [sign up for boot camp] so he kind of embedded it in our brain.”
- If boot camp were any shorter in length daily “there would have been no point” and “if it were an hour or two only, we would have been there two or three weeks.”

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3 The researcher did not want to make students uncomfortable during the focus groups by asking their race, ethnicity, age, and gender/sex.
Concerning boot camp tutors: “If I feel comfortable with certain people, I’ll ask a question. If I feel stupid, I won’t ask the question.”

Describe your post-boot camp experience.

• The wait time for WIN counselors can be very long and methods for setting up appointments with WIN counselors are unclear.
• Once students met with WIN counselors, they were quite helpful.
• If students were reminded about class registration, academic, and grade reminders, it was through their coaches.
• Many students found out about workshops from their teachers.
• The time of day when counselors are available and when workshops happen is salient – student’s schedules are quite restricted by practice and class times. Activity times should correspond with the usual practice and class timeslots so students can attend if they are free.
• “I feel like if we had one or two more counselors [available], it would be super helpful.”
• “You know at first… I’ve talked to several counselors and they’ve all told me different things. So I was really doubting myself and the counselors that I could get into the proper classes. I think I’ve talked to like four [counselors]. They both have different perspectives. I came back over here [to WIN] to the sports one. At first I talked to one of the counselors and they said you’re not really on the right path to be where you want to be. I left it and then came back and they said we’re going to get you out. This year I’m earning my AA in math.”
• “The first time I went to a counselor over there [on the main campus] it felt like they were rushing through. When I came over here [WIN], they took their time to explain what classes I need and why.”
• Concerning meetings with WIN counselors: “The meeting times depend. They really don’t put a limit on it. If you’re there [meeting with a counselor]. It’s not bad but if you’re waiting in line it can feel like forever.”
• “Our time is very limited. Sometimes we’ll show up and they’re [counselors] are not there. Sometimes we’ll show up and there’s a line. We have class or practice and can’t wait.”
• “When I go to the WIN, Erica is always like, what are you doing – reminding students of what they need to do.”
• “We had a couple counselors come out and tell us about...well they basically told us about what we needed to do [academically] to play [our] sport.”
• “I feel like it would be more helpful...if [my coach] were more on top of his players – not just about sports but about school work. Not just have enough units to play but ‘you need to take this, this, and this.’ Like a little more sense of direction.”
• On follow through by the coach for having the grades needed to participate in sports, some students remember their coaches saying if you do not have the grades, you can not play. The students said the coaches were very serious and two athletes were not allowed to play at a major competition.
• Concerning counselors: “During the times when we’re getting close to registering for classes...sometimes the wait is two to three hours.”
• Many students knew there were workshops but could not attend because they were offered

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4 This student visited both general campus counselors and WIN counselors. He received different information from every counselor on the classes he needed to graduate and if he could graduate. A WIN counselor was finally able to help him.
at inconvenient times that interfered with practice or class.

Was going to boot camp worth it?

- Boot camp was a good refresher.
- It was worth it.
- “For me, since I’m not too good in math, I thought I was going to score low...but [I tested higher] and it was a good improvement.”
- “In high school I took pre-cal but never really got the hang of it but after the placement test, I placed in trig.”
- “For football players, we need to get out by spring. Some schools, they want you to be at their school in the spring to be at the football practice.”
- “I didn’t enjoy the work [but] I knew I had to test out to get out in two years so for me that kind of work was ok with me.”
- “If I hadn’t took [the boot camp], I would have had to take another two to three classes.”
- “For that boot camp to work for me [it] cut out two to three classes [that] I don’t have to take and now I’m able to transfer like I can because of it.”
- “It was tough but worth it.”

What types of changes would you suggest?

- Students would like to see data on the percentage of students who test into higher classes upon completion of the boot camp.
- Students need to feel comfortable around the boot camp tutor and that it is ok for them to ask questions.
- Grouping boot camp by athletic team would help students feel comfortable.
- There needs to be more counselors and a better appointment system for them.
- Students would like more workshop signs on campus in other places than directly by the tutoring centers.
- The best way to remind students of boot camp, class registration, getting good grades, workshops, tutoring, and other programs is through the coaches or via phone call.
- Stiff penalties or rewards from coaches for attending boot camp, workshops, tutoring, receiving good grades, and registering for classes would help students.
- Boot camp needs more involved class activities “like helping each other, like classmates, like finding information from classmates.”
- Concerning boot camp tutors; “If I feel comfortable with certain people, I’ll ask a question. If I feel stupid, I won’t ask the question.”
- “Maybe boot camps based on athletic teams because athletes feel comfortable around their teammates.”
- Concerning counselors: “A lot of people take forever. We could come earlier in the semester. Maybe a reminder. Since we have a limited amount of counselors, maybe a reminder telling us to see one.”
- “Honestly, I wouldn’t really change it.”

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5 If a football player transfers in spring instead of fall, this means they need to have the classes to transfer one semester earlier than the usual four semesters accounted for transferring from a community college to a 4-year university.
Final Summary

Recommendations
This section provides recommendations on how to improve the summer athlete boot camp program to better encourage or facilitate the student equity project’s implementation plan and outcome goals. Please note that these are only the researchers’ suggestions based on the data collected and analyzed.

Recommendations resulting from qualitative research:

1. Use the athlete summer orientation and the coaches to promote participation in boot camp.
2. Encourage coaches to actively and consistently promote and explain the reasoning for earning good grades, registering for classes, attending workshops, and meeting with counselors.
3. During boot camp, continue one-on-one assistance and encourage peer-to-peer, small group, and class activities to engage students.
4. Arrange for more WIN counselors to be on staff at peak usage times (e.g. end of semester, during registration) and facilitate improvements to the student/counselor appointment system.
5. For the purpose of encouraging boot camp enrollment, provide incoming students statistics about the number of students who take boot camp and test into higher classes.

Future Research

Qualitative Research
As researchers, for future qualitative research we suggest further focus groups and an open-ended question survey. The focus groups should consist of a stratified scientifically randomly selected group of student athletes who participated in the summer boot camp. The strata for the sampling should be based off of the project’s identified demographics laid out in the Student Equity Plan. The focus groups will be used for the purpose of acquiring boot camp feedback from students who are actually representative of the demographics addressed in the project’s Student Equity Plan. The proposed open-ended question survey should be e-mailed out to all athletes who participated in summer boot camp. The survey should have questions that reflect the five guiding themes used for this report’s focus groups. The open-ended question survey will be used to gather data from the entire population based on the themes examined in the focus groups addressed in this report. Comparisons between the proposed stratified scientifically randomly selected focus groups and the proposed open-ended survey responses can then be used for the purpose of examining whether the general student athlete’s

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6 As addressed in subsection of Research Design located in the Qualitative Research: Focus Groups section.
boot camp and post-boot camp experiences are the same as the students who are being served by the Student Equity Plan’s project.