

California State University, Northridge

The Tseng College: *Graduate, International and Midcareer Education*
Graduate and Professional Education Programs and Services Unit (GPE)

Basic Principles for CSUN's Approach to Student Support for CSUN Self-Support Programs

- *(Proactive student support focused on student achievement, reflected in student survey ratings, and also as a contributor to retention, completion and on-time graduation.)* Managers and coordinators responsible for working with students enrolled in self-support degree and certificate programs, provide proactive student support, focused on student achievement.
- *(Serves as primary point of contact.)* Managers and coordinators work in teams to provide backup for one another so that student support is not interrupted by the absence of one manager or coordinator. However, each cohort of each program (or each year's entering group for programs not offered in a cohort format) has one manager or coordinator assigned as the primary point of contact.
- *(Must have advanced and strategic communication skills.)* Building and maintaining relationships are fundamental components of the work of managers and coordinators. In that light, advanced and strategic communications skills (written and oral, individual and group, digital and traditional) are essential capabilities for manager and coordinator roles.
- Program managers and coordinators are expected to build and maintain the following relationships:
 1. *(Establish a relationship between individual student and cohort/entry group.)* The relationship between students (individually and as a group) in each cohort/entry group and the assigned manager or coordinator is of great importance. Each student should feel they know the assigned manager or coordinator well enough so that contact with them is easy and natural. This enables the manager or coordinator to help each student to navigate the university. Students should feel comfortable asking questions and know that someone representing CSUN cares about their success and is available for, and responsive to, their inquiries.

2. *(Establish a relationship between the student and cohort/entry group and program.)* The relationship between students (individually and as a group) and the program: The manager or coordinator provides information about the program that helps students understand and appreciate its distinctive and valuable features.
3. *(Establish a relationship between faculty member or instructors.)* The relationship between the manager or coordinator and each faculty member or instructor ensures solid ground for easy communication and collaboration for each course. The manager or coordinator assigned to each program provides administrative and logistical support to the faculty and uses effective communication to help faculty engage with students in relation to administrative/logistical issues and understanding self-support programs.
4. *(Establish a relationship with the academic lead.)* The manager works in close collaboration with the director of GPE (who collaborates with the College's associate dean, as well as the Assistant Dean for Program and Enrollment Management) and the academic lead for the program. Coordination and communication among these roles are important to ensure a cohesive flow of relevant information to students. Generally, the manager or coordinator should be the primary point of contact for students. The manager or coordinator engages the academic lead when students have issues or questions related to the academic content, expectations, the instructor or instructional strategies, or academic work. Based on information provided by Tseng Finance, and projections by the Assistant Dean of Program and Enrollment Management, the GPE team conveys the minimum number of requisite enrollments for each cohort to the academic lead. The maximum desired enrollment number for each program is decided by the Dean of the academic partner college and the Dean of the Tseng College, in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders. GPE should ensure that the academic lead understands any fiscal ramifications of an enrollment cap, and conveys this to the department chair and college dean prior to jointly making the decision about the maximum desired enrollment for each cohort/program. There should be clear communication among the GPE team, the Marketing team, and the associate dean about information requested and communicated to the academic lead at any given time.
5. *(Establish a relationship between the student and academic college.)* The relationship between the students (individually but

primarily as a group) and the academic college that is home to the program: It is important that students feel they are a part of CSUN and the academic college and the department. The manager or coordinator is responsible for fostering this relationship throughout the program. This builds connections and engagement between students and CSUN that contribute to persistence during the program, as well as an ongoing connection to CSUN and the college/department after graduation.

6. *(Establish a relationship between the student and CSUN.)* The relationship between students (primarily as a group) and CSUN overall: The manager or coordinator is responsible for helping students get to know CSUN during their program of study (particularly for degree programs). This adds to a student's sense of engagement with the program and the university. In order to do this, the students should be kept aware of various opportunities of which they may avail themselves, as with their on-campus counterparts.
 7. *(Establish a relationship between colleagues from the Tseng College and the University.)* The relationship between the manager or coordinator and colleagues in the Tseng College (and in key roles in CSUN overall) ensures that the manager or coordinator can easily access and engage colleagues to help in resolving student issues and problems quickly and accurately.
 8. *(Establish a relationship with students as alumni.)* After students complete the program and successfully graduate, the program manager or coordinator helps them to understand the ongoing value of programs and services that are available to them and to their companies/agencies and communities. The purpose and general content of this communication for each program is developed collaboratively between the manager or coordinator and the Assistant Dean of Program and Enrollment management, who in turn, works with the Marketing director to craft the communications plan and associated materials. Program managers may also reach out to the CSUN Alumni office in order to foster alumni engagement, such as being guest speakers in future cohorts/information sessions, and the like.
- *(Knowledge of the assigned program.)* Program managers and coordinators are expected to know the program assigned by the director in full detail and to have command of the relevant CSU and CSUN policies and Tseng College principles and processes. This ensures that students are given accurate information and that the manager or coordinator knows

the right path to develop a solution to assist in resolving any student issues.

- *(Development and implementation of communication strategy.)* Managers and coordinators work collaboratively with the full team of managers and coordinators in the unit and with the director of GPE who in turn works closely with the Assistant Dean of Program and Enrollment Management. Program managers and coordinators are expected to contribute to developing a communications strategy and implementing it with specific adaptations for each assigned cohort, beginning before the cohort starts, and continuing through to its graduation. Each student should have ample opportunity to receive the information needed for success in the program at the appropriate time and as a direct communication from the manager or coordinator.
- *(Communication as personable and unique to the program manager/coordinator.)* Communication between the manager or coordinator and students has a personal touch and is ongoing and direct. Other communication tools used by the Tseng College include websites, marketing materials, formal announcements and the like. The communication from the manager or coordinator assigned to a program complements these other forms of communication but has a separate character that is designed for relationship-building and ensures a person-to-person link between CSUN and each student. Communication is expected to be timely, with the manager or coordinator responding to any contact from a student as soon as possible, but with the goal of being no later than one business day.

(Direct and indirect assessment of the program manager/coordinator.) Relevant sections of student satisfaction surveys provide valuable information about the effectiveness of program management staff's relationships with the students, as well as the effectiveness of the support and problem-solving provided. In addition to student satisfaction surveys, data on the retention levels in each program also provides supportive information, both about the effectiveness of a manager or coordinator, and also in identifying best practices that may be shared and refined by the full group. The director of GPE and the Assistant Dean for Program and Enrollment Management develop communication and relationship-building strategies for GPE staff as a whole, as well as with individual managers and coordinators, in order to ensure the strengthening of communication and relationship-building strategies. The director of GPE may also periodically provide guidance and feedback to help each manager and coordinator develop her/his communication and relationship-building capabilities, style, and strategic purpose.