

## **Progress Report**

Objective 1: Increase the number of under-represented students who declare a Nutrition major to 8 in year 1, has been met and surpassed. La Cena had 13 self-identified Nutrition majors at the Alamo Colleges (AC) for Academic Year 08-09. Objective 2: Increase the year-to-year retention rate of under-represented students majoring in Nutrition to 63% in year 1, has been met and surpassed to 69.1%. Currently, we are using the overall San Antonio College year-to-year student retention rate, because historical data is not yet available for Nutrition majors. Objective 3: Increase the number of under-represented Nutrition majors who transfer from the AC to the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) or Texas State University (Texas State) to 5 for each University, in year one, was not met for Texas State (3), and was met and exceeded for the UIW (6). Objective 4: Increase the annual retention rate of under-represented Nutrition majors who transferred to UIW or Texas State to 74% and 85% respectively, in year 1, has not been met for Texas State (66.7%) or UIW (50%).

The project was scheduled to start-up in Fall 08. However, at this time, the foundation was laid, but the PM was not hired until March 09 (Spring). In Fall 08, the La Cena website was to be developed and maintained; however, this did not occur until after the PM was hired. Also, academic support was to be provided in Fall 08; this was also not possible until organized by the PM in Spring 09.

Recruiting high school seniors and college students was done successfully. The PM was able to speak to approximately 137 high school students and 11 teachers, as well as 160 college students and 3 instructors. Scholarships were not awarded in Spring 09; even though this activity was on the timetable, there was not money in the budget to provide scholarships in year one. As of Spring 09, the La Cena website was developed, maintained, and accrued over 200 hits. Furthermore, La Cena was able to provide consistent academic support, and coordinate mentoring with UIW and Texas State students (which will take effect in Fall 09). La Cena was not able to host monthly presentations by Nutrition professionals (aka Nutrition Lecture Series) at this time due to the professionals not being scheduled until the PM was on staff. The Nutrition Lecture Series (NLS) will also start promptly in Fall 09. Students were not able to join a professional association, attend conferences, or visit the USDA-ARS, because these were activities not able to be planned out, due to late hiring of a PM. However, all of these activities are now scheduled and planned to be implemented Fall 09. The Hands-on Nutrition Workshop at UIW and Texas State and touring the Universities, was not possible for the same reason and has the same expectations for Fall 09.

The activities for the Summer 09 timetable included continued development and maintenance of the website and providing academic support, which were both accomplished successfully. The timetable also included NLS and students joining a professional association / attending state conference, which was not carried out for reasons stated previously.

## **Publications**

### **Products**

#### **Project A:**

The La Cena website ([www.projectlacena.com](http://www.projectlacena.com)) was developed to provide students, teachers, and anyone else who is interested, a quick and easy way to read about what La Cena is and what it does. The

website also outlines all of the services and opportunities available for students including scholarships, mentors, free professional memberships, fieldtrips, and advising. Furthermore, the website has a section on career guidance including interviews with Professionals in Nutrition and Food Science. Our website also includes related links, contact information, and a blog to inform students of upcoming activities and weekly Nutrition tips.

**Project B:**

La Cena brochures and flyers were created, handed-out and mailed to high school teachers in related fields to inform them about La Cena. The brochures and flyers include a brief summary of our grant, our objectives, and information about our services, and possible careers available with a degree in Nutrition and contact information. The flyers, along with posters are posted throughout Northeast Lakeview College. As of Fall 2009, the flyers will be posted throughout San Antonio College as well.

**Project C:**

Nine Interviews with professionals in various areas of the Nutrition and Food Science field have been conducted. These interviews include a variety of questions related to the Nutrition field, education, and work experience, as well as pictures of the professionals. Some of the interviews include short video clips and curriculum vitae.

**Project D:**

The PM provides personal individual advising to Nutrition Majors at the Alamo Colleges to inform them of the classes needed to take at the community college level to prepare them to transfer to a University to obtain a degree in Nutrition. Sample 2+2 degree plans are available on the La Cena website. "2+2 degree plans" denote degree plans that reflect 2 years spent at the community college and 2 years spent at the University to obtain a degree.

**Project E:**

The Alamo Colleges each have an academic success center that La Cena can refer them to, in order to provide tutoring in subjects that students are struggling with. Furthermore, the PM has personally tutored a student who wanted to retake the Accuplacer, to be placed into a higher Math course.

**Project F:**

The PM has and will continue to visit with high school students, teachers, and Alamo College students and teachers in related fields to educate them about the career opportunities available with a Nutrition Degree and how La Cena can assist students with obtaining a degree in Nutrition.

**Outcomes**

**Project A:**

The website is an efficient tool to allow students and teachers who are interested in our Program to learn about it. If a student is unable to meet with the PM, they can be directed to the website, where the student will be able to get a briefing of what their degree plan will look like, application links for memberships and scholarships, and information on what programs are available to them post Alamo Colleges, as well as career opportunities. The website will also be a useful tool to post upcoming Nutrition Lecture Series Speakers and other upcoming events. Students are more likely to join and participate in a program when information is easily accessible.

#### **Project B:**

According to our surveys, flyers have been the most effective means of recruiting students for La Cena. Brochures allow a more detailed explanation of the project to be handed out once students express interest. Brochures are also given to high school teachers in order to provide a convenient way for them to have contact information of the PM. Posters, being larger and simpler, catch the attention of more students and teachers so that they can inquire further.

#### **Project C:**

Interviews of Professionals in Nutrition and Food Science allow students an easy and interactive way to learn about the different career opportunities available with a degree in Nutrition. Knowing what careers are available and what they consist of, will influence students to feel more secure about obtaining a degree and a job in the Nutrition Field. Students knowing what to do with their degree once they get it, is almost as vital as obtaining the degree.

#### **Project D:**

The project manager (PM) outlines 2+2 degree plans for students so that they have a clear path of courses that they need to take to transition into a University. There is no point in taking courses at a community college, if your courses are not going to transfer into the degree that you want; so the PM makes sure students are on the right track so that when they are pipelined to UIW and Texas State, they are caught up on required courses.

#### **Project E:**

As you may or may not know, a degree in Nutrition is significantly heavy in the area of required science courses. This is the area that most students, seeking a degree in Nutrition, struggle with. Therefore, having a resource to direct students to receive academic support and pass their classes is imperative to a successful retention rate. Furthermore, students who place poorly in the Math section of the Accuplacer could be required to take up to four remedial Math courses before they are eligible for a College Algebra course. College algebra is a prerequisite for Chemistry courses. Therefore, academic support is needed for these students so that they are able to test into and be prepared for high level math courses and take required chemistry courses successfully.

#### **Project F:**

Recruitment of high school seniors and college students is a necessity of our project. Recruiting students allows us to have a growing foundation of students interested in Nutrition to meet our objectives of the Grant, and have these students transfer to a university and graduate with a degree in Nutrition.

### **Dissemination Activities**

La Cena's dissemination activities include a Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter account, a monthly newsletter, our website, brochures, flyers, posters, and visiting high school and college level classrooms in order to distribute information to the public and discuss La Cena's achievements, activities, impacts, and more.

### **Future Initiatives**

Activities planned to occur beyond the funding period include applications for similar grants and a continuation of the Student Nutrition Organization at Northeast Lakeview College (NLC), started by Project La Cena. Also, the PM will be sure to educate the advisors at San Antonio College (SAC) and NLC about the courses students need to take to transfer to a university to obtain a degree in Nutrition, so that post the funding period, students will still have a resource for that information.

### **Impacts**

#### **Project A**

The La Cena website enables students to learn about the program and career opportunities in Nutrition, and in effect, increases the number of underrepresented students who declare a Nutrition as a major to 13 in year one.

#### **Project B**

Brochures, flyers, and posters also attract and enable underrepresented students to learn about the project, join, and be immersed into the field of nutrition to promote healthier eating habits and lifestyles.

#### **Project C**

Interviews with Nutrition Professionals further motivate and inform students to decide on and obtain a career in the field where they can improve health in Central /South Texas as well-trained nutritionists.

#### **Project D**

Advising provides La Cena students with a clear understanding of the process of becoming a nutritionist and completing their education, leading to an increased number of underrepresented nutrition majors who transfer to UIW or Texas State to 10 and 10, respectively, by Spring 2011.

#### **Project E**

Academic support also increases the retention rate of underrepresented Nutrition majors to 64.5% by Spring 2011. Retained nutrition majors are more likely to complete their degree, providing students of diverse backgrounds access to higher education.

### **Project F**

Recruiting from targeted high schools (minority enrollments: 44-98%), and allowing them access to our services, assists in the need to increase Hispanic education levels. Furthermore, 70% of Hispanic adults are categorized as overweight or obese; if we recruit this population into a field where they are educated about Nutrition, we can significantly lower this percentage.