

Scholarship Resource Center (SRC)

I attended 3 meetings of the SRC Advisory Board this year. All have included a report on the current state of the center, including the following issues: adequate space; student traffic; increase in the number and kind of scholarships administered through the center; change in director's duties; center goals; funding; and responses to student concerns. As SFAC has always expressed both support for the work the center does for undergraduate students, and a concern that the center be able to monitor the number of students that they reach and help to obtain scholarships, this report focuses on these two factors.

Because SFAC wants to ensure that students pay the lowest possible fees, both individually and collectively, we have agreed that having a center which helps students find non-loan money is an asset. Over the past few years, the center has increased the number and kind of scholarships it administers while also increasing its information on outside scholarships. While the annually-updated CD-ROM scholarship search software provides UCLA students with resources that are not widely available, the web site seems to be on its way to becoming the center's most valuable tool. During the spring meeting, the director, Angela Deaver Campbell, reported that as the UCLA e-campus has grown, the ways the students use the web site has changed. Four years ago most students visited the office before going to the web site. Now, most go to the web site first.

SRC has updated its web site to increase its utility, including flashing messages for students whose GPA makes them eligible for various merit-based scholarships, logical links among scholarships with similar requirements, and the ability to download some applications. The site has been recognized as site of the day by Yahoo, meaning that it has gotten the most hits on a single day. Campbell also reports that she has been contacted by the comparable office at Berkeley for advice on how to improve their services. Much of the success can be attributed to having a career staff member with web expertise. I would advise that if the staff person leaves, another person with similar skills be hired.

The SRC has made efforts to track its success, including a comprehensive survey that was distributed in a mass mailing. While the questions were good, hindsight leads me to believe that the number of questions may have lowered the level of student response. The survey yielded a positive appraisal with a very low level of return. The frustrations with that situation are obvious. We must rely on only a few students.

In addition to counting the people who enter the office, SRC has proposed putting a counter on its web site. As of the last meeting, there was a bureaucratic hurdle to that step. Although the staff person knows how to add a counter, only their assigned information services person is allowed to do so. Also, installing a counter may be subject to some administrative limitation. If we can do anything to advocate for permission to install a counter, I believe we should.

When the committee began this year, there were representatives assigned from USAC and GSA as well as from SFAC. By the last meeting, I was the only non-SRC worker student present. While I believe that the presence of a graduate student is useful, especially in comparing the SRC and its web site to comparable services for graduate students, an undergraduate student presence is invaluable. These students can not only offer their perspective on undergraduate needs, but also can take information about the SRC back to their various constituencies.

Tracy Curtis, Spring 2000