

# Merced College "Study Central" Available to all MC Students

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The Merced College cafeteria is quickly becoming the new hangout for students and instructors to connect with each other in an informal way. "Study Central" is a program designed to put an end to the myth that instructors and counselors are not approachable or "don't have time for me." It also serves as an informational hub for all student services and its goal is to improve academic success and retention.

"Research shows that once a student makes connections outside of the classroom, he/she is more likely to stay enrolled," said Susan Flatt, Merced College SSPIRE Grant Coordinator. "And, if for some uncontrollable circumstance, a student has to drop out, he/she is more likely to reenroll when situations make it possible if the student had an outside of class connection."

"Study Central" is a result of a grant from the James Irvine Foundation and MDRC. SSPIRE stands for "Student Support Partnership Integrating Resources and Education," a three-year grant which began in January 2006. Merced College receives \$250,000 over the course of three years to find innovative ways to improve student success, retention, persistence and to help more effectively integrate current support services.

For a variety of reasons many students don't utilize instructor's office hours, thus, by locating "Study Central" in the cafeteria, it naturally lends itself for the convenience of the students. Also, simply by being more visible, students become more aware of the services the program offers. "We hope "Study Central" promotes an environment where academic dialogue between students and instructors working together to understand course material develops the necessary skills that will make a student more successful in college," concludes Flatt.

The hours for "Study Central" are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. It is closed on Fridays. Study Central is located in the front section of the cafeteria by the glass windows in the Student Union. A faculty member or counselor is always on duty to provide instruction, information, assistance, and answers to any questions a student might have. It is open to all Merced College students and staff, and Internet access is available.

To learn more about Study Central, visit the website at [http://www.mccd.edu/academics/resources/study\\_central.html](http://www.mccd.edu/academics/resources/study_central.html).