

Core Team Meeting

June 19, 2015

Lynn Library 207

9:00 a.m.

Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Austin – Chair, Janet Barton, Megan Eikner, Nancy Forrest, Emily Gilbert, Janine Goode, Mark Hanna, Olga Kleffman, Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, Penny Massey, Kristin McDonald-Willey, Jason Norman, Kelly Prater, April Sessler, Dr. Deborah Vess

Others present:

Student Representative: Abraham Tenorio

Recorder: Carolyn Leslie

MEMBERS ABSENT: Carol Bevel, Melanie Castro, Dr. Tamara Clunis, and Reem Witherspoon

Student Representative: Cutter Love

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – (Bob Austin)

- Bob Austin asked for approval of the minutes from the May 22, 2015 No Excuses Core Team meeting. Kelly Prater made a motion to approve the minutes, and Olga Kleffman seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by majority vote.

CALL FOR ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS AND ACTION ITEMS - (Bob Austin)

- Kelly Prater will give an update on her study of the work-study program.
- There will be a discussion as to whether the No Excuses Committee will meet in July.
- Bob Austin gave an update on the committee membership. Dr. Vess' office is working on committee appointments for the 2015-2016 school year. The Cabinet will also discuss committee member recommendations. Appointments for the 2015-2106 No Excuses Committee meetings will be sent out once committee assignments are finalized.
- Bob requested that a discussion on textbooks be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Payment Plans – (Olga Kleffman)**
 - Olga Kleffman informed the committee that a student who would like to utilize the payment plan for tuition and fees must pay half down at the time of signing up for the plan, with an additional \$20.00 processing fee. This has been difficult for students with limited resources.
 - The college has been following the rule that said all of the money for tuition and fees had to be collected by the middle of the semester. The payment plan regulations have been governed by the Co-Board. Payments had to be made prior to the 5th and 11th weeks of the semester, but now must be paid by the end of the semester.
 - After doing more research, Olga discovered that guidelines have changed and options for payment plans have become more flexible for students.
 - In the past, Colleague only allowed one type of payment plan, but templates are now available to create more options for payment plans. Since more options are available, Olga suggested offering payment plans for Fall 2, Spring 2, and Summer 2 sessions. Olga said there is also a need to offer payment plans to those who are taking dual credit courses.
 - Megan Eikner, Kelly Prater, and Olga met to discuss payment plan options, and decided that this would not be feasible for Continuing Education classes since they are shorter in length than academic classes.

- There was a discussion as to the different ways the payment plan could be set up to more effectively help the financial needs of the students.
- Bob asked Olga Kleffman, Kelly Prater, Meagan Eikner, and Melanie Castro to meet, and develop scenarios as to options that could be used for the payment plan. He would like for them to present the scenarios at the next meeting, have committee members ask questions, and vote on the guidelines and policies on new payment plans for students.
- The goal will be to begin the new payment plan options in the spring semester.
- Another issue involving payment for tuition and fees is payment deadlines. Dr. Vess and the department chairs need to know how many students have registered for classes in order to decide if other sections need to be added.
- Committee members expressed concern over required down payments for students as well as the increased cost to students when they are encouraged to take more classes each semester. Bob said that a discussion is also needed on textbook options for students, and will be included in the agenda for the next meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- **Strategic Plan Update – (Bob Austin)**
 - Bob Austin gave each committee member an article on questions and answers with the authors of the book, *Redesigning America's Community Colleges*.
 - Developing the Strategic Plan was a unique process which began with the Cabinet reading a book entitled, *What Great Community Colleges Do*. The plan consists of four broad categories and every division on campus worked on a section of the plan. Once the Cabinet sent their division's ideas to Dr. Lowery-Hart, he compiled the information into one document and met to discuss the document with the Cabinet at a Strategic Plan Retreat.
 - The Cabinet was not able to complete the Strategic Plan during the retreat, and will complete it at a later time. The Cabinet has a deadline of August 15, 2015 to complete the Strategic Plan.
 - Dr. Vess' division had a day long retreat, and worked with program coordinators, registrar and advising. They tried to key into the five institutional goals, and also worked on block scheduling. Progress was made for the spring semester.
- **Consistent Messaging (No Excuses, Achieving the Dream, WOW, etc.) – (Megan Eikner)**
 - Megan Eikner began a discussion on imparting the No Excuses, Achieving the Dream, WOW etc. initiatives in a consistent way to all employee groups.
 - Dr. Vess suggested that assessing the Culture of Caring, and Achieving the Dream initiatives during the interview process of potential AC employees, would help determine if applicants were on board with the mission of Amarillo College.
 - The committee discussed implementing a purpose statement for the college with the possibility of weaving the Culture of Caring, and No Excuses initiatives together. The purpose of this would be to provide a means for employees of AC to be able to impart the college's purpose to the community and students.
 - Meagan Eikner will talk with Dr. Vess about how to connect with new employees and impart AC culture to them.
 - Bob said he will follow-up with Dr. Lowery-Hart, and ask him to consider what the committee discussed concerning a purpose statement.
- **Wayfinding Signage Update – (Russell Lowery-Hart)**
 - The new signage has been delivered to physical plant and they are currently working on a plan to install the signage before the fall semester begins.
 - The signage will be a help in directing people where they are needing to go on campus.
 - IT has been working on updating the maps used on cell phones. The program will work with Google maps and help individuals find their way to the different buildings on campus. It should be available in a few weeks.

- **Academic Advising Update – (Jason Norman)**

- Jason Norman reported that advising is in the process of developing guided pathways and degree maps for every program at AC. Advisors will be using these with every student.
- Advising is also working to realign with the HB5 endorsement areas. The five clusters are: STEM, Business and Industry, Public Services, Arts and Humanities, and Multidisciplinary Studies.
- Advising has been contacting 329 students that previously withdrew from classes. They are working to enroll these students in classes.
- Advising will also partner with Student Life to get more students involved in the transfer initiative.
- The advising department will have a welcome desk where students will be greeted and helped whenever they enter the advising area.

- **Additional Item – (Kelly Prater)**

- Kelly Prater did a study on the work-study program. She discovered that \$50,000 was lost out on for work study and \$17,000 in funds were not used because students were not coded correctly. Financial Aid is encouraging students to complete the FAFSA and have included a question on the student job application asking if they have completed a FAFSA. They will also help students complete a FAFSA if they come in with a student job referral. They are hoping that this will make a big impact for students without changing the budget.
- Kelly said financial aid will continue looking at work-study funds and departmental budgets. She also said that it will be necessary to help people understand how to allocate work-study funds for each department.
- Dr. Lowery-Hart said that a recommendation needs to come from the No Excuses committee for this to happen. Kelly will work with Jason, April and Olga on developing a formal recommendation to present to the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.
- The next meeting is scheduled for July 17th at 9:00 a.m. in Lynn Library, room 207.

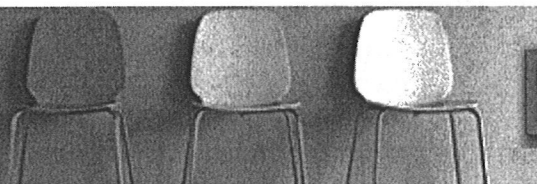
Recorder: Carolyn Leslie

Carolyn Leslie 7/17/15



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Q&A with authors of book about redesigning America's community colleges

Submitted by Ashley A. Smith on April 2, 2015 - 3:00am

Success at community colleges will take off once institutions streamline their offerings. That's the position the authors of *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* take.

Thomas R. Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars and Davis Jenkins, all with the Community College Research Center at Columbia University's Teachers College, believe the current cafeteria approach -- where students select from often hundreds and thousands of courses on their path to earning a degree -- is wrong for two-year colleges. They propose the guided pathways plan, which creates a structured and more narrow program of courses.

It's an approach that helped King-Kennedy College in Chicago win a 2015 Aspen Institute Rising Star ^[1] institution award this year. In the book, the authors show that despite a massive reform movement to improve student success at community colleges, there has been little evidence that the country has seen widespread improvement. The three authors jointly responded by email to questions about the new book, which will be released April 9.

Q. How has the traditional cafeteria approach hurt community college students?

A. The focus on low-cost access has encouraged colleges to offer an array of often disconnected courses, programs and support services that students are expected to navigate mostly on their own. Students are confused by a plethora of poorly explained course, program and transfer choices and available programs often do not provide a clear path to success in further education and employment.... While advising, career services and other supports are provided to students who seek them out, those who need such services the most are the least likely to take advantage of them. Community college departments closely monitor enrollment in their courses, but they often do not know which students are pursuing programs of study in their fields and thus do not track students in their programs to ensure that they make steady progress toward achieving their goals for program completion and transfer.

Finally, the focus on courses rather than on programs may undermine student learning. Because students are typically allowed to cobble together their schedules from a long list of electives, their programs often lack the sort of coherence that is essential for building skills across the curriculum. Meanwhile, faculty members conduct course design and instruction in isolation from one another.

Q. Would a guided pathways plan lead to fewer "career-oriented" courses being cut from colleges and limit the opportunity for students to expand or broaden their college experience?

A. Guided pathways are as relevant for students interested in the humanities or social sciences as they are for students interested in what are traditionally thought of as career-oriented programs. Guided pathways for both occupational and nonoccupational programs include general education courses to impart basic knowledge and well-designed opportunities for exploration, especially for students who are still undecided on their majors.

In the guided pathways approach, faculty work across disciplines to create a curriculum that is educationally coherent and thus enables students to build skills across the curriculum.

Rather than merely hoping that students will somehow pick up these skills -- critical thinking skills, understanding global diversity, appreciating the arts, interpersonal relationship skills -- through an array of disconnected courses, in a guided pathways plan, faculty select curricular content that will help build those skills while still being clearly relevant to the student's larger interests and goals.

Q. Redesigning a guided pathways approach can be an expensive proposition for an institution. How does this plan fit with free community college policies that are emerging across the country?

A. It is notable that in Tennessee and Chicago, where policy makers have adopted free community college policies, the systems are implementing systemic reforms to improve student outcomes -- in both cases following the principles of guided pathways.

While the effects of free community college policies on completion are uncertain, they are likely to increase enrollment, including among students who might not otherwise have gone and are poorly prepared for college. Such policies are designed to help students pay for college, yet they do not provide additional resources for college. If free college policies increase enrollments among students who need more support, without adding resources for colleges... then colleges will find it even more difficult to support each student to completion.

C.C.R.C. research [2] finds that to the extent that guided pathways reforms improve student retention, they are likely to increase colleges' operating costs, because as more students persist, the college has to provide them with more instruction and support services, which are not fully covered by the course-based reimbursement plan used by most states. Implementing guided pathways reforms also involves other up-front costs, including

faculty and staff training and upgraded computer systems for improved student-progress tracking.

Our analysis suggests that colleges can cover some of these costs by reallocating existing resources, but if colleges are to serve a much larger number of students, they will need more resources per student. Given the strong returns to public investment in community colleges in terms of increased earning and other benefits, this added investment would be an excellent one for taxpayers -- provided colleges introduce processes such as guided pathways that will improve outcomes.

New Books About Higher Education [3]

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Links:

[1] <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/03/19/chicago-community-college-quickly-improves-completion-rates>

[2] http://www.mcca.org/uploads/ckeditor/files/DavisJenkins_CCRC_Guided%20Pathways%20Overview_Revised%20Oct%202014%281%29.pdf

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