

Part H: QFE: Quality Focus Essay

Introduction of Projects

The Skyline College mission is “to empower and transform a global community of learners.” Skyline College serves a richly diverse student body that is 18% Filipino; 20% Hispanic; 18% White Non-Hispanic; 17% Asian; 21% Multi-Ethnic; 3% African American; 1% Pacific Islander; 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native; and 1% unreported. Honoring the communities from which students come is a paramount value and practice for Skyline College. The diversity of the student body and all of the cultural and historical stories that enrich the College teach us how to be humble and grounded in the local community.

As such, Skyline College has a long history of working through a lens of critical consciousness, praxis, and leadership rooted in equity and social justice. Driven by data-informed practices, Skyline College faculty, staff, administration, and students worked over three years to establish the Comprehensive Diversity Framework in 2013, which outlined the College’s commitment to social justice and academic excellence.

Through the work of the Comprehensive Diversity Framework, the College discovered and took ownership of its shortcomings in what we called our “Brutal Truths.” These shortcomings included low completion rates, persistent equity gaps, and excessive unit accumulation. Analysis of recent data, along with the ISER process, has helped the College take stock of the work that still needs to be done to improve student learning and student achievement.

The College’s persistence and completion data show that while both have improved in recent years, student completion rates are unacceptably low, and significant equity gaps remain. First-time Skyline College students’ overall three-year associate degree graduation rate is 13%: 17% for full-time students, and 6% for those starting out less than full time.

Table 30: First-time Student Cohort Persistence and Associate Degree Completion

Unit Load	Skyline College Entering Cohort	Fall to Fall First-Year Persistence at Skyline College or at Any SMCCCD College		Completion Within Three Years
		Enrolled at Skyline Fall 2016	Enrolled in SMCCCD Fall 2016	
First-Time Students Entered Fall 2015				Earned a Degree By Spring 2018
Full-Time	608	79.1%	83.7%	17.1%
Less than Full-time	342	62.3%	67.3%	6.4%
Total	950	73.1%	77.8%	13.3%

Table 30 Source: Skyline College Institutional Data. First-time student cohort persistence and associate degree graduation data for fall 2015 cohort, filtered for students with an educational goal of degree, certificate, and/or transfer.

- Significant differences exist in the three-year completion rates among ethnic/racial groups: All students 13%, Asian 17%, African American 3%, Filipino 12%, Hispanic 10%, Pacific Islander 6%, White 15%.
- First year fall-to-fall retention within the District stands at 78% overall, with significant differences when disaggregated by racial/ethnic groups: Asian 87%,

African American 47%, Filipino 80%, Hispanic 78%, Pacific Islander 66%, White 77%.

Another concern is the excessive number of units completed by associate degree earners, adding unnecessary student time and expense. While Skyline College students need only 60 units to attain an associate degree, during the five most recent academic years, Skyline College graduates earned a total of 83 units on average. Graduates across race and ethnic groups saw similarly high numbers of total units earned, ranging from White graduates completing with a total of 80 units on average, to Pacific Islander graduates earning a total of 90 units on average.

Skyline College can do better. Our institutional culture and leadership lens is focused on increasing graduation rates, reducing time to completion, and closing opportunity gaps (with a deliberate focus on race, class, and gender) such that inequities in student completion rates are diminished. We call this intentional and deliberate effort the Skyline College Promise: “A commitment to empower students to find success at every point in their educational journey, so that they can get in, get through, and graduate on time.”

The Skyline College Promise is rooted in the idea that more must be done to remove systemic barriers facing students to achieve their educational goals. Skyline College is committed to:

- Encouraging full-time enrollment;
- Addressing financial obstacles;
- Establishing clearer pathways to degree completion;
- Providing better wrap-around services to meet student needs, and;
- Supporting the intellectual and emotional growth of students through transformative learning experiences.

Skyline College recognizes that effective equity-minded efforts must intersect all aspects of the institution; that responsibility for identifying barriers and transforming structures must be both coordinated and shared; and that shifting this paradigm begins with creating an institutional culture that is reflective, self-knowing, engages a listening stance, and practices critical inquiry. These intersecting practices promote deeper engagement, more innovative approaches, a constantly evolving consciousness, and a greater likelihood for praxis and transformation. As a result, Skyline College has undertaken a holistic, integrated, and systemic transformation of its structures, processes, and culture that we call the Comprehensive College Redesign.

The goal of the Comprehensive College Redesign is to disrupt “business as usual” and empower every member of the faculty, staff, and administration, in partnership with students, to engage in critical reflection and evaluation of institutional policies, practices, and procedures, thereby promoting deeper engagement, more innovative approaches, a constantly evolving consciousness, and a greater likelihood for praxis and transformation. In short, we are replacing “college-ready” mental models with “student-ready” institutional structures and culture.

Although the work of the Comprehensive College Redesign began two years ago, the need to bring our work to scale is still evident. Thus, we chose to focus the Quality Focus Essay on our efforts to improve student success and alleviate barriers to achievement. This work will be completed, as outlined below, through three signature components:

- Meta Majors and Guided Pathways
- Transformative Teaching and Learning
- Promise Scholars Program (PSP)

Meta-Majors and Guided Pathways

Over the past two years, the Design Team has facilitated workshops, flex day activities, campus forums, campus-wide division meetings, work team meetings, and student focus groups that have laid the foundation for the Meta Major work. Through this multi-year college-wide process, Skyline College has made significant progress creating components of Guided Pathways: Meta Majors, intentional course sequences, and tying student success milestones to progress through completion. Our Meta Majors—Arts, Languages, & Communication; Business, Entrepreneurship, & Management; Science, Technology, & Health; and Society & Education—were designed and named by incorporating student feedback into the process. Intentional course sequences were designed by instructional and counseling faculty, with career counselors contributing student development benchmarks, so as to support navigation toward completion.

Now that structures are in place, the institution needs to focus on the implementation, campus-wide, of these efforts. The action plan for this next stage includes mapping courses into intentional course sequences to better guide students, designing communications materials to inform students about Meta Majors, and creating assessment and evaluation plans to gauge the progress of these efforts.

Table 31: Action Steps for Implementation: Meta-Majors and Guided Pathways

Activity	Description of Work	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Continue to develop intentional course sequences	Map GE courses into intentional course sequences informed by student feedback and GE efforts.	Counseling faculty, Design Team co-leads, Director of Guided Pathways, Academic Deans, GE committee, instructional faculty, and students	Fall 2019
Establish a continuous review and update process for Meta Majors and Guided Pathways	Determine the processes and structures to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued placement of degrees/certificates into Meta Majors All parts of the intentional course sequences are up-to-date Names and groupings of degrees /certificates are relevant to students Meta Major and Guided Pathways supports are updated and integrated with new initiatives 	Director of Guided Pathways, Curriculum Committee, Design Team, Administrative Leadership Team	Fall 2019
Redesign marketing efforts for Meta Majors and Guided Pathways	Review current marketing materials and incorporate student feedback/design ideas to create new marketing efforts (e.g., website, apps, flyers) that ground the students' experiences in the framework of Meta Majors and Guided Pathways.	ASSC, Design Team co-leads, Director of Guided Pathways, Design Team, MCPR, students	Fall 2019 – Spring 2020
Further refine career and academic benchmarks for each degree program	Engage various stakeholders in review and continued conversation about specific career and academic benchmarks, events and supports for each program.	Strategic Partnerships and Workforce Development Division, Director of Guided Pathways, counseling and instructional faculty, Design Team co-leads, Learning Commons, students, and Transfer Center	Spring 2020
Evaluate Meta Majors and Guided Pathways	Determine data collection methods, analysis process, and reporting mechanisms that will be used to assess if Meta Majors, Guided Pathways and counseling redesign are meeting students' needs and leading to student success.	Administrative Leadership Team, Counseling faculty, Dean of Counseling, Design Team, Design Team co-leads, Director of Guided Pathways, MCPR, and PRIE	Fall 2019 - ongoing
Integration of faculty around Meta Majors and Guided Pathways	Engage both counseling and instructional faculty in conversations and professional development activities around the “student experience,” support team concept, and Meta Major programming.	Administrative Leadership Team, Design Team co-leads, counseling and instructional faculty, Professional Development Coordinator	Fall 2019 - ongoing

Continue to develop the Meta Major experience	Coordinate various stakeholders that offer current campus programming (e.g., transfer events, career nights, experiential events, etc.) and engage them in conversations and collaborative planning, scheduling, and budgeting, to create a holistic and integrated student experience.	Dean of Counseling, Design Team, Design Team co-leads, Career Center, Transfer Center, Promise Scholars Program, Equity and Support Programs, Learning Commons, Outreach	Fall 2019 - ongoing
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Table 31 Source: Skyline College Meta Majors and Guided Pathways Team

Transformative Teaching and Learning

The Comprehensive College Redesign focuses on the responsibility of every employee to help create and support an institutional culture that is reflective and inclusive, engages a listening stance, and practices critical inquiry. Ultimately, no matter what position an employee has on campus, it brings an opportunity for teaching and learning. As such, the College defines transformative teaching and learning as “embracing the limitless potential of all learners in a co-creative, relevant, and innovative environment that fosters curiosity and critical thinking and gives space to lived historical and cultural identities to change lives and communities.”

Therefore, the College has committed itself to the development and incorporation of curriculum bundling, assessment methods, and campus-wide pedagogical practices that will inform transformative interactions between all employees and students, while providing all learners the context for making relevance and meaning of their educational experience. To achieve this, we created a number of inquiry teams to investigate, recommend, and help implement transformative teaching and learning practices.

Additionally, the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning (CTTL) will lead our College through campus-wide professional development efforts to ensure the institutionalization of the transformative practices researched and developed by the work teams. The Student Equity and Support Programs Division (SESP) will further support this signature component through its semester-long Equity Training Series where faculty, staff and administrators convene monthly for training and action-research to both increase consciousness of biases due to race, gender and class, as well as to promote a more equitable campus culture.

Table 32: Action Plans for Implementation: Transformative Teaching and Learning

Activity	Description of Work	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Further infuse equity pedagogy into instruction, academic services, and student services through equity training series	Provide all employees the requisite equity training needed to sustain the new institutional design and approach.	Deans, Dean of Equity, CTTL Director	On-going
Align CTTL strategic plan with College Redesign in order to advance transformative pedagogical practices	Coordinate with HIPs & GE Teams, and service learning to develop a professional development plan to support the institutionalization of reflective and thematic pedagogy, and other related practices.	CTTL Director & staff, HIPs Team, GE Team, Director of Guided Pathways	Fall 2019
Creation of student group	Form a student group that is representative of the College demographics, whose role will be to collaborate on design, engage the student body for feedback, and support the implementation of design components.	Design Team co-leads	Fall 2019 (establishing) Ongoing
Scale e-portfolio	Select software, as well as determine where in the Meta Major/GE thematic model e-portfolio's will be utilized.	HIPs Team; Design Team co-leads, Director of Guided Pathways	Fall 2019 (establishing) Ongoing
Implement thematic GE bundles	Continue campus-wide engagement in determining themes, and identify courses associated with each theme.	GE Redesign Team; Design Team co-leads; Director of Guided Pathways	Fall 2021

Table 32 Source: Skyline College Meta Majors and Guided Pathways Team

Promise Scholars Program (PSP)

Skyline College is committed to addressing issues that impact students' ability to access, enter, progress, and successfully achieve their educational goals. After studying innovative initiatives in higher education, the College chose to replicate CUNY's highly successful Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) as a way of improving completion by reducing key financial barriers and redesigning counseling and guidance systems.

In fall 2016, Skyline College began to pilot the ASAP model within the culture and structure of the College, calling the initiative the PSP. Students in the first cohort received focused counseling support, a scholarship for one full year of tuition, free textbooks through the library, and fee waivers to reduce college expenses. The College brought the replication to scale in 2017-2018, adding workshops on topics such as careers and career benchmarks, navigating school, and socioemotional aspects affecting achievement like resilience, motivation, and grit.

The PSP reached full replication status in fall 2018, with a director and eight counselors (part time and full time) hired, and 507 Promise Scholars enrolled. Promise Scholars now receive financial support consisting of up to three years of fee waivers, textbook vouchers, and monthly transportation incentives. Promise Scholars also receive priority registration, blocked GE courses, required tutoring for students experiencing challenges in their academic coursework, and dedicated counselors with small caseloads in both 1-to-1 and group counseling session formats, based on a tiered support model.

With the arrival of the fall 2019 cohort, the total number of Promise Scholars will reach 750, approximately 80% of all full-time, first-time-in-college students eligible for the program. For the foreseeable future, program enrollment at Skyline College will remain at approximately 750 students, the maximum number of students that can be supported at current funding levels. The College aspires to build a highly impactful program whose success will allow for further fundraising and eventual expansion to all students.

While fully launched, the PSP is still very much a nascent program that the College is learning to integrate, scale and evaluate. For example, as the program grows, many more students will have multiple College identities, such as EOPS and TRiO, as well as learning communities like Puente, CIPHER, ASTEP, and Kababayan. The PSP is working to collaborate with other programs to assist students using a needs-based, case-load counseling approach. The program is also working with the office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) to establish additional outcome metrics, and to create a series of reports that can be used by PSP staff and counselors to track student progress in real time, allowing for early interventions as needed.

Table 33: Action Plans for Implementation: Promise Scholars

Activity	Description of Work	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Establish evaluation of Skyline College's PSP based on CUNY ASAP protocol	ASAP replication calls for continuous evaluation of student progress and program.	PSP Director, Dean of PRIE, Vice President of Student Services	Fall 2019 – Spring 2020
Compare program participants' results with non-participants' results to determine program impact.	Develop criteria for a meaningful comparison group for PSP participants, and compare student success indicators, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retention rate 2. Graduation rate 3. Academic measures, including GPA and course success rate 	PSP Director, Dean of PRIE	Summer 2019 (establish comparison group) Ongoing evaluation
Collaborate with Categorical Programs & Learning Communities to provide a more integrated PSP experience for students	Develop protocol for ensuring program compliance across EOPS, TRiO and PSP to allow students the opportunity to participate in and benefit from all programs they are both eligible for and willing to participate in. Categorical, PSP and Learning Communities leadership will meet regularly to establish protocols and troubleshoot challenges as they arise.	PSP Director, Directors of Categorical Programs & Learning Communities, Vice President of Student Services	Fall 2019 – Spring 2020
Build technological capacity for data tracking, enrollment, engagement, & student progress toward completion	Develop system for reliably analyzing student-level and cohort-level data, based on counseling engagement, and course success. This includes developing a short-term plan for combining student data from SARS and	PSP Director, Dean of PRIE, Dean of Enrollment District IT staff, District VP of PRIE	Fall 2019 – Fall 2022

	Banner, and a long-term plan for building relevant dashboards for the PSP during CRM implementation.		
Scale impactful features and components of PSP counseling model to the general student population.	Work in conjunction with the Counseling Division to scale tiered-support model, and develop strengthened coordination between instruction and student services.	PSP Director, Dean of Counseling	Ongoing

Table 33 Source: Skyline College Meta Majors and Guided Pathway Team

Anticipated Impact on Student Learning and Achievement

The three components of the Comprehensive Redesign are designed to have a far-reaching impact on student learning and achievement. The combined effect of Meta Majors and Guided Pathways, Transformative Teaching and Learning, and the Promise Scholars Program will be to enhance student learning, increase overall completion rates, reduce time to completion, and reduce equity gaps in student achievement. Improvements are expected to be gradual, but steady, with the first changes being to course success rates, and significant reduction of equity gaps taking at least several years.

Assessment Plan to Evaluate Outcomes

Outcome metrics for the Comprehensive Redesign will include the measures of student success currently used in the Skyline College Scorecard, plus additional metrics to be determined through the Skyline College governance process during fall 2019.

Current Skyline Scorecard metrics that will be used to evaluate Comprehensive Redesign:

- Successful course completion rate (non-cohort based)
- Fall-to-spring persistence rate (first-time student cohorts)
- Fall to fall retention rate (first-time student cohorts)
- Three-year associate degree completion rate (first-time student cohorts)
- Average time to completion of associate degree (first-time student cohorts)
- Average number of units accumulated by associate degree earners (non-cohort based)

We plan to introduce additional metrics to better track student progress over the course of their college experience, and to serve as early indicators that faculty and staff may act upon. New metrics that may be added through the governance process include:

- Successful completion of transfer-level math and English in first year (first-time student cohorts)
- Term to term retention of full-time status (first-time full-time student cohorts)
- Successful completion of 15 units per term rate (first-time full-time student cohorts)
- Certificate completion rate (first-time student cohorts)
- Transfer to four-year college rate (first-time student cohorts)
- Combined transfer, degree or certificate completion rate (first-time student cohorts)

Results of outcome metrics will be reviewed annually by various constituencies including the Design Team, Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC), Strategic Planning and Allocation of Resources Committee (SPARC), College Governance Council (CGC), and President's Cabinet. Should annual progress not meet goals established through our governance process, leaders of the signature programs will collaborate with the Design Team co-leads, the Director of Guided Pathways and Comprehensive College Redesign, the Design Team, and the Administrative Leadership Team to make adjustments. In addition to yearly progress reports, after completion of the 2022-2023 academic year, the College will produce an in-depth review of the Comprehensive College Redesign to date.

PART H ACRONYMS

ASAP	CUNY's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs
CDF	Comprehensive Diversity Framework
CGC	College Governance Council
CTTL	Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning
CUNY	City University of New York
IEC	Institutional Effectiveness Committee
PRIE	Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness
PSP	Promise Scholars Program
SEP	Student Educational Plan
SESP	Student Equity and Support Programs Division
SPARC	Strategic Planning and Allocation of Resources Committee
SSSP	Student Success and Support Program