

SEED/Student Equity May 24, 2010

Attendance: Leslie Shelton, Jacqueline Vila, Lavinia Zanassi, Rick Wallace, Nina Floro, Maria Escobar, Vicki Morrow, Dennis Wolbers, Barbara Daley, John Chavez, Regina Stanback Stroud, Amory Cariadus, Rob Johnstone, Melissa, Mitschelitsch, Richard Soyombo, David Hasson, Lucia Lachmayr

I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow

Than a sleepy and permanent planet. The proper function of man is to live, not exist. I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them. I shall use them wisely. Jack London.

Regina thanked the group for looking at the issues and student success writings that influence it. She found an article called equity in a flat world of existence, Linda Darling-Hamlin at Stanford done a lot of work around equity in education. She pulled out of two questions from the actual reading from last time about educational equity.

Vicki appreciated hearing the unique and individual issues that people had that shaped their thoughts around equity and where their passion comes from.

1. What would it look like if educators were willing to assume responsibility for students' low achievement and failure?

Rick: it is a broader context than just the educators' responsibility.

Vicki: we would be systematic and rigorous in asking for information about what is effective.

Lavinia: how we look at educators would be broader, many others would take responsibility.

Nina: ask questions of myself about my teaching and hope others would do the same to look outside myself into core systems and other structures in place that I might use to help me.

Melissa: this is what it looks like when educators take responsibility. If anyone is presently taking responsibility, she feels it is the educators.

Regina: some educators feel students are not prepared and don't know how they can help them. Melissa says educators do want to know how they can help them be ready.

Amory: create more intentional ways to build relationships between educators and students.

Rob: following up on Vicki, it gets down to the focus on the outcomes and not on the process or structure. If you focus on the outcomes, it is always a change agenda. If you want to take responsibility then A) define and B) decide what are the innovative things that can be done to change the outcome. Very few have been scaled or permeate throughout the organization.

Lavinia: there may be things that we cannot fix. Is it good to bring something up that we cannot change?

Leslie: has thoughts about the definition of low achievement and failure, are these based on standardized tests, units of measure. Are definitions of what it means to be successful need to be looked at and acknowledge the capacities that people have.

Regina: less words about remediation and how we look at our practicees, systems in place, processes and what shifts we make at the college.

Vicki: think globally, act locally. Skyline is unusual and has so many innovative projects. Part of our culture, in spite of underfunding and other things that impinge on our work, people at skyline are biased for taking responsibility and what can we do for making things work better.

Melissa: sometimes it is an unmanageable goal and it is harder to do your job.

Regina: our pedagogical processes would change.

Lucia: there is a culture of inquiry at skyline. She suggests taking a holistic look, which we are doing with fye and learning communities, but we could spread out and look at what school, foothill-math, valencia did in everything, look at what they did to close the achievement gap. Rob: at valencia it started with ownership of student success, they reshifted the focus. It was a broad approach, it was under the achieving the dream umbrella.

Lavinia: does not see skyline as special, but sees a common thread with neither institutions. She said what she does see is that students all have the same issues, but a little of her time goes a long way and thinks being a role model can help. Wants to know what makes skyline unique-residual-what are we talking about?

Vicki: we are getting statewide recognition for our transfer success and learning communities. It may be the demography, social crossroads, not sure, but it is a good question to ask what works and what is effective and how can we capitalize on it?

Regina; we are willing to look at ourselves and entertain the thought: why did half the class fail and why did I fail half the class?

Lucia: it is the skyline teaching mentality to be student focused.

David: skyline is a close knit college, geographically, and we are close to the city, the notion of different subjects going together, talking to each other, and there are all these things very close to each other.

John: skyline has changed over the last 10-15 years. When he was hired, he felt like he was fighting against the current. Did it

Vicki: catch the wave of our innovativeness and figure out how to approach the issues around student equity.

Regina: there are a lot of things to take advantage of looking at this question, it means looking at our ourselves. Math has a 50% failure rate across the state. How come this is not perceived as a crisis? What would it look like if we decided to take responsibility for that? How is it that we consistently fail the same students over and over again?

Melissa: what can we do more of, rather than what are we not doing. Having models of success help her and also being aware of the subtle negative models. She also would like to see more role models that people can relate to and more diverse staff.

Leslie: seeing students as capable and look at reshaping teachers approaches to engage broader capacities, different thinkers. She cited an example with Jump Start – we identify those students as capable right off the top, treat them like college students, and they do succeed and the idea of who they are expands.

NEXT QUESTION: Letter to our next president.

Vicki: because it can.

Leslie: source of funding comes from the community, it reinforces the inequity.

Lucia: also pacific islanders are in the deficit. Social class and ethnicity are inextricably linked. The problem is perpetuated. The minority community has not been empowered to address this problem and force the shift.

Rick: why do we spend more on prisoners, particular in California, about \$50K per year, which is more than we spend on a child's education.

Regina: there are large sociological discussions around race and class that need to take place.

Richard: it is not realistic to have people who have no connection to the people they are working with make good decision. There needs to be more education and literacy between these two groups.

THIRD QUESTION

There was a talk about anti-intellectualism.

Regina pulled this question out to look at it in response to the achievement gap.

Rick talked about assimilation of various peoples that have moved to this country. This committee should have a conversation around assimilation.

Barbara: the average American relates to the myth of the self-made man. We have lost sight of what is like to immigrate.

Richard: it is a way to control poor people, we are more of a capital-oriented society and that affects decisions.

Rob: the point of entry for change is too difficult, but we are limiting ourselves in our ability to think past the barriers in front of us. As we bring things back closer to us here, people need to try things that take them away from the way they have always done it, try them and then look at systemic change. It is not comfortable. If you focus on the outcomes, you are okay with it being uncomfortable.

Nina: initiate discussions around campus, it is necessary and collectively we can do something because we have rich resources here, like the students do with each other.

Melissa: she wants to see us come back with action items, pick a few and decide how we are going to implement them and take them to our colleagues outside of the group.

Regina:

We are so busy with our day to day that we don't take the time to have these in-depth conversations, but they are necessary. Then make sure that the work we do, the reading we did, we transition it to say what does it mean for skyline, how do we as committee members divide the work to have greater success, diversity and student equity. Decide what is our approach, strategy, what leadership do we take, what effect do we want to have on the institution, and how do we do it.

Lucia: let's look at Valencia so Rob will get some.

Leslie: what are we doing here that is around this that is working, where are the gaps, map that out.

Melissa: make a suggestion to the chancellor about scheduling someone to talk about equity.

Regina: recommends reading information, there is good information out there, stream of books out on white privilege and they have been helpful to her. In the heart of whiteness, talks about struggles that whites have around conversations of race and Everyday Racism is about strategies that take place in schools and higher education that address some of these issues. Art of Critical Pedagogy, Ernest Morell, focuses on pedagogy of the oppressed. Regina will share a bibliography on this.

Rob: does this group stay combined next year.

Vicki: for the work we undertake should we work together?

Two questions:

Should we continue to meet together?

Regina asked if meeting together serves both missions. Lavinia said if the work overlaps, they should meet together.

There is specific work of each, David said.

In its charge, seed's activities have focused on cultural competence, diversity, equity and things around campus, events, that focus on cultural diversity.

David thinks they should be merged.

Vicki: structural joining is for down the road.

Rob: we will keep the meetings on the fourth Tuesday.

Regina: come back with concrete strategies as part of our summer project.