SEEED/Student Equity Committee
March 22, 2011

Guest: Singhashri Gazmuri

Attendance: Lucia Lachmayr, Regina Stanback Stroud, Rob Johnstone, Amory Cariadus, Barbara Daley, Dennis Wolbers, John Chavez, Rick Wallace, Jocelyn Vila, Melissa Michelitsch, Joe Madrigal, David Hasson, Pat Tyler, Nina Floro, Nohel Corral, Lavinia Zanassi,

Rob and Regina developed frameworks for the equity audits following the November meeting where the domains were identified and people assigned. California Tomorrow was the originator of the program and Singhashri and some other people took over their some of their ideas and tools and are continuing the program. Singhashri started at California Tomorrow specifically on the Campus Change Network. Rob said the external advice we are going to get from this project will be valuable.

Lucia: asked if this is similar to the campus change project that we did before. Singhashri said it was really about developing leadership and a dialogue among groups that normally don't talk. It was very broad and a good starting point. This work is about drilling down, and how do you integrate the work now across all levels of the campus and ultimately impacts students and student learning outcomes. Regina: we incorporated the CCN and worked with a variety of staff, identified issues. Some of which were not addressed and some were incorporated into our plans and pushed into Foundations of Excellence which got pushed into FYE and the basic skills plan.

The CCN started in 2003, with the publication of California's Gold, which featured interviews about experiences in community colleges with students, faculty and staff. The issues raised became the focus of a larger work project with selected colleges and many of the colleges developed plans that were very different but basically assessed the current state of affairs at their colleges.

Overview of the Equity-Driven Systems Change (ESC) process:
Singhashri reviewed the ESC model and talked about the organizational policies and practices, campus environment and political climate, access, supports and opportunities, and student outcomes. What they try to highlight: you need to pay attention to the cultural dimension of change: relationships between the various groups in a campus.

She referred the process (page 8). The process are: teambuilding and focusing on context for the work; equity-driven data gathering and analysis (this is here the audit begins) and developing inquiry questions; then strategy development (much like strategic planning); then exploring student-centered measures of success, keeping in mind the student outcomes always; then reflecting on progress and planning for the future.

Developing a Diversity Framework:
She reviewed the goals and talked about the University of Minnesota diversity framework, so we are using that language. The goals:
- Create a vision for institutional diversity, equity and student success. It is good that we are bringing it together because it really is one vision.
- Develop institution-wide strategies
- Develop an implementation plan with action steps.

We will have three meetings this spring and Singhashri hopes by the end we will have some inquiry questions in place and then starting in fall we will create data gathering plans and rob will do the data gathering. Then there will be a two-day retreat in mid-fall where we will do a massive analysis of the data and then launch ourselves into the planning process, which may present some contradictory issues, which may need to change to move the college into a new direction. From there, there will be implantation planning and talk about what structures need to be put in place to move the plan forward.

Note: the Minnesota study is posted on Skyline's SharePoint site.

Lucia: are we tackling one or two things or developing a master plan for 5 years. Singh: we have identified the domains, but they do not include everything in the institution. Regina: these are connected to the overall district strategic master planning process and there were just a few that we decided on for Skyline, example: developing a comprehensive diversity framework, which led to the development of the eight domains.

Singh: she envisions developing elements of the vision. We are not working on the long-term vision but what will be in place in three-five years as a result of our process. It is done in a consensus model. There is a design team that is forming to guide this work to make sure we have the right people in the room or are there gaps in the makeup of the committee that need to be filled. The expectation is that the SEEED members can make all of the meetings and be fully present and able to do the work between the meetings.

Regina: in the last minutes, reviewed the goals that the committee established, as well as the timeline and process identified. Rob: you have to commit to doing this work and we are at the stage to now doing that work. Regina: we committed to starting to prepare drafts, have the work begin, and then have it presented to the committee. We then realized that we needed help doing the equity audit, so the timeline established in November would not work.

Singh: by December, we will have a diversity framework in place and the beginnings of a research agenda.

Retreat: we don't know the date or the location, but we will need to figure it out by the end of the spring so people can make arrangements. A two-day retreat will help focus the group in a certain amount of hours; otherwise we would have to push out the planning.

Team Building:
The group reviewed the Ground Rules for Authentic Dialogue. Dennis said perhaps the group might be a little more dispassionate, leave emotions aside, and be a bit more objective. It is more about being involved and engaged. Melissa thought it might be good to be objective and get things done and less about feelings. Focus on process and results were added. Regina: wants people to speak up and take ownership, be honest and not posture. So, speaker: don't be afraid to offend and listener: it is okay to be offended. Trust peoples' best intentions. Joe Madrigal: in dealing with diversity, people will have different perspectives to share, if we don't practice it, we won't have buy-in on this plan. He is glad to see that everyone's opinion is respected regardless of the position they hold at the college. Singh: that is why it is important to have students in the group.

Developing a focus question:

It is the question that you want to answer through the planning process. It narrows and drives the focus of the inquiry you wish to do and where you want to drive your strategies.

Domains:
1. Community connections
2. Curriculum and pedagogical approaches to equity
3. Resources to succeed
4. Student support services
5. Communications
6. Hiring
7. Institutional climate
8. Leadership

She asked people to review the domains in small-group settings and given the data and what you know, what do you think should be driving the institutional framework.

Rob: How do we create more effective internal processes, cultures and structures to help students succeed on their specific educational trajectories? To equitably focus on the range of trajectories and how our process affect those trajectories.

David: how is our classroom pedagogy changing to close the achievement gap? Compare syllabi would be one way to help.

Regina: what is in place or not in place that precludes us from recognizing and supporting excellence inherent in the diverse college community and how do we broaden our definition of student success to include equity at all levels? Melissa is concerned that we don't use limiting language and there needs to be equity at all levels of achievement.

Nohel: how do we assess our current systemic processes, connections both on campus and off and success to best serve our students and community?

Barbara: talked about what we can do to improve to how we connect with Skylines, how do we communicate to them what our resources are? We talked about how our information is communicated. Can we form a focus group of students, contact the various offices and get it started, get everyone more engaged as a whole, instead of isolated work in our individual departments. Empower each other to be passionate about our students and answer the phones. How do we make people happy to come here and work with the students?

People focused on student success and also the internal relationships on campus. She heard about assessing, specific question on classrooms. There are a lot of elements. We don't have time to combine them into a focus question.

She sees two that are captured in the domains: How is our classroom changing to close the achievement gap? Also what can we do to improve how we connect with and communicate with students?

She read the remaining ones:
How do we create more effective..

What is in place or not in place that precludes…
How do we assess our current…
How do we empower each other to be passionate about students.

She proposes bringing them to the design team and they can formulate workshop topics. The design team will be a sub-group: Regina, David, Rob, Sandra Rodriguez, Lucia, Nohel, Pat Tyler, and possibly Nina Floro. There was a discussion around who else should be on that sub-group and it was suggested that a student be invited.

Singhashri is sending out a team survey on Friday and asked people to return it by April 15. The next meeting is on the fourth Tuesday of the month, so the next meeting is April 26. She asked the group to also do their own mapping of the domain areas and complete the parts of the rubric that are in the tool kit. It is a self-assessment on how well we are doing in terms of equity on that domain.

Nohel: enjoyed the open dialogue and found it inspiring, Pat: empowering and interesting and is happy to see us moving forward. She also likes Singhashri's approach.