

SEED/Student Equity Committee Meeting
April 26, 2011
Summary Notes

Attendance: Dennis Wolbers, Melissa Michelitsch, David Hasson, Amory Cariadus, Vanson Nguyen, Mason Feldman, John Chavez, Nohel Corral, Rick Wallace, Lavinia Zanassi, Nina Floro, Sandra Rodriguez, Lucia Lachmayr, Larissa Spadna, Maria Escobar, Regina Stanback Stroud, Mike Williamson, Joe Madrigal. Guest: Jing Luan

Subcommittee inquiry process completed for next meeting. We will have a diversity framework by December and then move through continuous improvement cycles. Singhashri reviewed the ground rules for discussion and added a new one:

- Don't be afraid to offend. This way we can be free to challenge.

The design team met last week and looked at the focus questions to form them into one question. It can be refined or changed as time goes on. It is the overarching question that the college is trying to answer as it builds the framework. The focus question that was developed:

- How do our systemic processes impact equity, collaboration and communication to help or hinder student success?

Rob said success may be different for different students. Singhashri said student success has either not been communicated well or there is not a definition of what it is. Lucia feels it is a broad question. Lavinia felt the word equity is difficult to define across the board. Melissa asked why SEED/Student Equity committees were brought together. Regina said initially the three goals were:

- Create a holistic diversity framework and create a research agenda.
- Implement professional development activities
- Increase the dialogue around campus.

Melissa said it should also be about institutional improvement in addition to student success. Regina wants to make sure that diverse hiring is also a part of this.

There was further discussion:

- Nohel said the group should look at who is looking at this question. Perhaps, eliminate the word "our" and use Skyline College.
- Regina suggested creating a model that can be shared with the sister colleges.
- Rob feels that student success is the ultimate measure. He agrees that staff and faculty improvement affect student success, but he would like to see the ultimate outcome as student success.
- David suggested looking at the focus question as introducing the first priority, which should be students.
- Mason asked what the group is going to do with the question and why are we boiling it down to one question?

Singhashri said each subcommittee will look at its domain in terms of the question and how it will frame the domain. She feels there are flaws in the question that we may not be able to fix right now. We will need to work around the ambiguity that the question presents at this time and some of the problems around the question may be addressed over time.

Team Survey

She reviewed the survey responses. Vanson noted that as she moved through the survey responses that there was less passion about student success. Mike said many people want us to really commit to the ground rules and there was concern that this might or might not happen. Joe said there is concern that the process would be put into action and not be shelved. David had a question about the achievement gap and Lucia thought it does have to do with equity. Singhashri said it is a question in that they may not be the same things. Rob said achievement gap has centered historically on students who could not achieve. Regina has an article on the achievement gap that she will send. Singhashri said people have been trying to change the definition of achievement gap for the past 10 years. She asked the group to look at these in terms of teambuilding needs:

- Have a common definition for terms
- Talk about ways to gain trust, share how we really feel

Second round of surveys presented. Issues on campus: Regina concerned that many of the responses are concerned with us. She feels the climate should reflect the ways we are not serving students and should not be about our needs. John: felt that the cuts were directly affecting the students and how they are being served. Melissa: a 70% adjunct rate means they have other jobs and students are not having access to many teachers because part timers are stretched thin. Lucia: concerned about EOPS and DSPS cuts having an impact on students that most need help.

Barriers: some focused on barriers on the campus and others on barriers within the group. Mike: sometimes there is a feeling of not being a part of planning process, the cohesiveness of a group. Joe: some people don't understand the role of the groups on campus. Mike: the topic is difficult to talk about. Rob: the fusion of student services and instruction is still a bit of an issue here and it may have to do with the budget. There is a dichotomy just in the way that these programs are funded. Lucia: people, in particular classified staff, have more work and are not being paid to do it. Singhashri: let's work to break that barrier to address student success.

Opportunities and other projects on campus that this work should be tied to:

Other external factors:

Community preconceptions and attitude to the institution: Singhashri asked about this and Rob said he heard that it could mean that there is a misperception about what the college does. Nina: community colleges are just an extension of high school and that can affect students' attitudes about their attendance here. David: seamless integration, same vocabulary, same message throughout all our communication pieces, i.e. a PR makeover. Mike: people have felt over the years that Skyline is "not as good" as our sister colleges and he feels we need to relish and celebrate that we are as good, but it can affect our internal thoughts about ourselves. Melissa:

she feels her students are proud to be here and the education they get here will prepare them to go anywhere they want to go. Sandra: two alumni are proud of their education here and Singhashri suggests interviewing them about their experience here.