Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Given my work to support California community colleges, key themes have emerged that are causing (or will soon cause) challenges at some campuses with Guided Pathways planning and implementation.

**Challenge #1:**
Some campuses are still using one steering committee to plan and implement GP.

*Why is it a challenge?*
The body can't absorb all of the work that GP requires. There's simply too many moving parts to GP.

*Solution:*
Create working teams (i.e., workgroups). The key word is *working*. These teams meet at least twice a month and have leads that also come together to form a team to ensure ongoing clarity, coherence, and consensus. Ideally, **workgroups need to start their work ASAP**. Unless there's a good rationale, it's important not to wait long to set up the workgroups. They're key to establishing a steady momentum.

**Challenge #2:**
Some campuses still have a core group doing the "behind-the-scenes" work to shepherd the GP process. The group often consists of VPs (sometimes the college president) and Academic Senate President or VP.

*Why is it a challenge?*
VPs and Academic Senate representatives already have enough on their plate. GP is a major undertaking. They don't have the bandwidth.

*Solution:*
Hire a GP coordinator or co-coordinators. The coordinators tend to be faculty. The coordinators can have a regular setting with the original core group to bring them up-to-speed, trouble-shoot when necessary, etc. The coordinators also help set the agenda for the steering committee AND they participate in the workgroup meetings. This means spending money. Most, if not all, campuses rarely spent from their 2017-18 allocation. Now they have 2017-18 plus 18-19 funds to spend. Many rank-and-file have conveyed to me their frustration that it can take decision-makers months to mull over how to spend funds. They don't want people to be careless about spending. It just means they rather not see decision-makers ponder endlessly over it. To get things done it often means spending money sooner than later. California is the only state to provide funding for GP. Out-of-state colleges have had to implement GP with existing resources.
Challenge #3:
Teams that have formed directly from the 14 work plan elements are experiencing false starts, delays, and confusion.

Why is this a challenge?
1. While initially well-intentioned last spring, some campuses have come to realize this fall that some teams that were configured in the late spring don’t make sense. For example, a "cross-functional inquiry team." At some campuses the inquiry team is IR people only. That’s it! IR is being asked to create an extra setting to discuss data around GP. Unless there's a genuine cross-functional team with active participation from all areas of the college, this team is redundant. IR would be better leveraged to support workgroups with data and ensure that GP planning and implementation is seen through a student equity lens. Some of the other work plan elements are also actions that need to happen with GP planning and implementation. These work plan elements don't necessarily need to be teams.
2. Related to the previous point, some work plan element descriptions submitted by campuses last spring are much too vague. They lack concrete direction for teams. This also makes it challenging to budget for specific needs when the language is so general.
3. Last but not least, the 14 elements don't necessarily get to the redesign that is necessary for campuses to implement the 4 guided pathways pillars effectively. Ultimately, colleges will need to form teams for each meta-major developed. When and how should a campus introduce a few such teams and for which meta-majors? When and how should the campus implement this structure with ALL meta-majors? These questions should be discussed in 2018-19. See Bakersfield as an example below. There's a "completion coaching community" for each meta-major. Each completion coaching team goes through a cycle of inquiry and over time develops a continuous improvement mindset. This is why Bakersfield has experienced tremendous gains in student outcomes. What needs to happen at your campus to get to this redesign?

Bakersfield College Meta-Majors

Arts, Humanities, & Communication
[2463 overall; FTIC 477]

Business [2583 overall; FTIC 447]

Education [1750 overall; FTIC 359]

Health Sciences [4450 overall; FTIC 981]

Industrial & Transportation Technology [1157 overall; FTIC 317]

Public Safety [1222 overall; FTIC 176]

Social & Behavioral Sciences [3,798 overall; FTIC 835]

STEM [2450 overall; FTIC 527]

Personal & Career Exploration [1617 overall; FTIC 290]

Completion Coaching Communities

Student Support Specialist
Financial Aid Advisor
Faculty Discipline Experts
Counselor

Data Coach
Academic Development Faculty
Peer Advisor
Ed Advisor

Administrative
There are more challenges I can share. For example, many campuses still don't know what GP is. Many people think it's meta-majors where a counselor is embedded here and there and ensure there's program maps. That's not GP. The image above is GP. It's how to operationalize the 4 pillars of GP to their fullest potential.

It's been a privilege to facilitate conversations that have resulted in self-realizations. These "ah-ha" moments are critical to effective GP planning and development. I don't want to make it seem that GP is all about challenges only. With challenges come opportunities!

Also, if you haven't already, I encourage you to read my latest GP piece: Guided Pathways: Addressing Concerns

Onward...

Best,

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Support Services