Middlesex Community College
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Minutes from the Academic Identity Task Force

Wednesday, October 4, 2017

Call to Order: Dr. Steven Minkler convened the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Dr. Steven Minkler, Michael Amouzou, Linda Ansarra, Ricardo Barrett, Diane Bordonaro, Sara Brinckerhoff, Dr. David England, Jill Flanigan, Jaime Flores, Dr. Yi Guan-Raczkowski, Catherine Hostetter, Lauren Katusha, Dr. Lin Lin, Anastasia Pych, Yvonne Rubin and Dr. Victor Triay

Dr. David England was introduced as the Visiting Dean of Strategic Initiatives. He will attend meetings for each task force as part of the developing strategic initiatives for the College.

The MxCC mission statement was read and briefly discussed regarding the major goal of taking students to the center of the College. There are three strategic priorities which are the focus of reaching this goal, Rebooting Our Advising, Registration, and Retention System; Developing a 21st Century Marketing Plan; and Declaring our Academic Identity. The Academic Identity Task Force is the team working towards the following goals:

- Seeking our identity through addressing who we are and what we are known for
- Determining which standards we uphold
- Ensuring that our academic programs and part of the center for excellence
- Finding which data should be used
- Using limited resources efficiently, focusing on most effective ways to serve students

The deadline for completion is February 2018.

There are recommendations, which the College extracted from its data collection, that the team is using for managing goals. The following questions were instrumental in determining the direction of the task force.

1. What do our students say?

   Students are pleased with the extra help that is available on campus. They especially enjoy visiting the Library because of how well it is stocked. They especially feel that the staff are friendly and helpful. Students also like their professors and find them to be helpful, which fosters a better learning experience.

2. What does our community say?

   Our community is engaged in the fact that the college offers cutting edge programs, such as video production and manufacturing. The college's faculty, staff and administrators are easy to work with and responsive to the needs of the community. Open enrollment and ease of use for our application process rank high with our community.

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3. What do our alumni say?

    Middlesex offers a low cost, high quality education, which is what many current and prospective students are seeking. The campus grounds are beautiful and the size is the right size for students to feel comfortable and have the college feel. Our alumni speak highly of their former professors; they enjoyed the pedagogy which was based on text and "real world" experience. Many alumni returned to campus annually for the Arts & Media Festival.

The remainder of the meeting was spent brainstorming to develop goals, establish elements of academic identity and to identify data we have and have used, data we have and have not used and data we need to get.

Goals

- Identify strengths and weaknesses of the College
- Identify signature programs that represent the college positively
- Develop academic standards (how we communicate these to students)
- Career pathways for students (use non-credit courses as feeders to credit)
- Identify programs that are not performing well
- Develop metrics to assess students' readiness
- Assess demand for our programs
- Determine how our programs related to employer needs
- Guided pathways
- Explore collaboration in view of the community college consolidation
- Reconcile programs with financial reality of CSCU & MxCC
- Set foundation for continuous improvement

Elements of Academic Identity

- Programs
- Culture
- Reputation for rigor, e.g. science to transfer to UConn, CCSU or SCSU
- Location and campus
- One step in a lifelong process (connection to the next step)
- Affordability
- Career and transfer
- Special programs/cohorts (MAP, TYP, Honors, Prison Ed)
- Tying career with academia (collaborations and endorsements from companies)
- Us!!! (showcase faculty)

Data We Have, And Have Used

- Student demographics
- Enrollment by program
- Budget figures
- Retention, graduation, and transfer rates
- List of transfer target institutions

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Data We Have, And Have Not Used

- Zip code map by program
- Student success compared to student intent
- Student success compared to financial need
- Transfer data from the National Clearinghouse
- Graduate survey
- Strategic planning documents
- Success rate of "Pre-XXX" students

Data We Need to Get

- Involve students
- Differentiation between MxCC and other community colleges
- Attitudes and perceptions of high school counselors
- Comprehensive view from local employers

Other Points

CSCU pathways have greater enrollment than legacy program. Our focus is to help students academically, so that they can ultimately find jobs. Programs clustered in the catalog should assist students to determine their focus. Advising conversations with students should be guided from General Studies to Pathways. Logistics must be in place with general and senior advisors.

An email will be sent to elect co-chairs. Co-chairs' roles will be to help with team communication, sort out smaller focus groups and forward recommendations to management for implementation.

Task Force Homework

Prior to the next meeting the following sub-committees will meet.

- Sara Brinckerhoff, David England and Jill Flanigan will review the Strategic Planning document and identify information pertaining to academic identity.
- Diane Bordonaro, Catherine Hostetter and Yvonne Rubin will develop questions for student interviews and focus groups.
- Linda Ansarra, Ricky Barrett, Lauren Katusha and Victor Triay will develop research questions that address what we want the data to tell us?

Dean Minkler adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda B. Ansarra
Office of the Dean of Academic Affairs