

Strategic Goal #4: Improve Student Career Preparation

May 24, 2013 SC203

Attending: Co-leaders Chuck Phair and Dawna Perez, members Ashley Bragger, Christine DeRosa, Deborah Regan, Deb LaValley, George Moriarty, Pat Morrow, Paula Richards, John Sabbagh, Megan Shea, and Silvia Serrano.

We began by updating the team on the work of the two subcommittees. First, we discussed the progress on the workshop offerings. Recently, we brought together multiple groups, including Student Leadership Development, Student Success Center, Student Outreach Squad, and Learning Accommodations to talk about the best way to consolidate workshop offerings and to boost attendance. The meeting was very productive with groups agreeing to share workshop offerings, make them open to all students, and agree on non-conflicting times. We have also been meeting with Nora and Mike to make more sense of the CPAC workshops that are being offered. With all of these collaborations, our goal is to revamp the workshops and the workshop descriptions, to present a logical flow of topics, and to maximize our workshop offerings.

For the CPAC workshops, a series was proposed to go along with our career checklist. The team saw the proposed new series of workshops and their descriptions. The series follows a natural flow. In the fall we will have the Encounter series which involves career exploration, strengths discovery, and website navigation. Also in the fall is our Discern Series which will focus on beginning a job search, initial resume writing, and dressing for success. Then in the spring we will have two more series, the Connect Series which has interviewing, advanced resume writing, and social media in your job search, and the Achieve Series which focuses on dressing for success, mock interviewing, and networking. With these workshops, we are trying to engage advisory board members, alumni, or community members to be guest lecturers at the workshops and to interact with students.

Additional suggestions were made. For example, Paula is willing to do a workshop on service and employment in the community, and Silvia is doing a presentation for Student Leadership about selling volunteerism and unpaid positions in their job search. It was also suggested that we engage faculty on this. One way Pat suggested is to require faculty to put the workshops into their syllabus as a part of their grading and to require students to attend. Other suggestions to improve this effort included:

1. Build in curriculum about dealing with the online applications and learning how to navigate the labor market information available (workforce development said they can help with this)
2. Discussing career pathways that show how much education is required to get certain jobs
3. "Thinking inside the box" - interpersonal characteristics that students need in order to be successful in their careers
4. Incorporate into workshops how students can prepare for back-up plans in their careers for when personal situations arise
5. On the new workshop series pamphlet, define the series titles (Encounter, Discern, Connect, and Achieve)

We also need to consider people changing careers in our workshop design. Silvia is hearing more from older adults who are unsure about what direction they would like to go in their careers. Perhaps workshops by design, by demand would be best to offer to older students looking into a second career or re-training.

Additionally, there is a conversation going on about the institutional direction in regards to career tools. It appears that instead of using Myers-Briggs, we may be looking to go more towards StrengthsQuest or DiSC. The pros to using MBTI are that the codes are cheap to test students; however, the training is expensive. Strengths cost \$12.50 per student code and DiSC costs \$25.00 per student code. Deborah, Gisela, and Glennys are trained in MBTI and Karletty is looking to get trained in the fall. We need to learn about what is more recognized in industry.

Also discussed was the John Holland test. Currently, the college is using a short version quadrant form. It was suggested that the self-directed search would be much better, coupled with its formal companion career and major booklet. Combining all of the tools will help to enhance our student's experience. If we use StrengthsQuest in the classroom and MBTI outside the classroom, we can help students find connections and develop their career paths. Further discussion is merited.

Member, Pat Morrow, updated the team about Middlesex Community College's Student Professional Day Conference. They have 24 students signed up to attend a professional development day which includes the art of the thank you note and cyber image, among other topics. Ashley is going to attend the conference and will report back to the team. Dina Brown also initiated something similar during the NECC's Professional Day this year. She held a series of workshops that day which were very well attended by students in the Leadership Development Program.

Member Christine DeRosa sent out a survey to faculty about StrengthsQuest in the classroom. She reported that as a college, we buy at least 200-400 codes and that we have used all of them this year. She will update the team with more formal results, but as an overview she reported the following:

1. Many faculty use them in their classroom
2. Some refer to it throughout the whole semester
3. One limitation a faculty member reported was the need for more training to help faculty understand the results and properly direct the students
4. One faculty member knows everything about SQ and uses it in all her classes, she noted that:
 - o There is a whole online chapter about SQ and careers
 - o SQ could be used more in CPAC and portfolio development
5. Although some faculty are really using SQ, it is not enough and we need more faculty to not only use this great tool, but to completely understand how to use it to benefit their students.

In terms of the website subcommittee, we are still waiting for budget approval for NACElink/Symplicity. A survey has been sent to advisory board members asking them about their usage of this type of system and to identify the key hiring person at their company. These identified individuals have been asked to participate in a focus group about the system's usefulness. We brainstormed focus group questions and Ashley will send out a list to the team asking for them to fill in the missing pieces. It was also suggested that we include in the alumni section of the website a story and profile of successful alumni so that the image of our school can be enhanced.

NECC is hosting the Massachusetts Community College Career Counselors Association meeting here on Friday, June 7th. Our group is attending during lunch, and we would like to have questions prepared to ask the other colleges. Mike M. informed Dawna that other community colleges are struggling with very similar issues such as recruiting, marketing programs, and attendance. The team brainstormed questions and Ashley will send out a list for the team to revise and add to.

Currently, our career portfolio idea is on hold, as the college is looking into a component add-on to DegreeWorks.

Member Deborah Regan provided the team with an update on her Work Study proposal. Deborah has proposed using work study students as a captive audience to increase their career preparation. She reported the following:

1. There are about 200 Work Study students, 40% have non-profit placements
2. Off-campus work study assignments tend to be the most successful due to mentoring and career interest alignment
3. They have an orientation and a contract to address dress code, scheduling, and job duties
4. There is a possibility to have work study students do a career preparation program. There appears to be some flexibility with this as a requirement, even though there are federal guidelines.
5. Courtney from Work Study plans to become a member of SG4

Lastly, we discussed ways our group can establish better communications and collaboration between the Lawrence and Haverhill campuses. Dawna suggested that another subcommittee be formed around community engagement that addresses this issue.

KEY POINTS

- The Goal Team wants your help and encourages members to pick an interesting project and get involved! More to come on moving forward with the Portfolio Development.
- Encourage members of the college to join the team or to reach out to Dawna or Chuck with suggestions!

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT/DISCUSSION

- What are the necessary components of a Career Portfolio and how will the portfolio fit in with the student's academics?
- Who will lead the subcommittee for community engagement?

NEXT STEPS

- **Christine** will update the team about the SQ survey results
- **Dawna** to send invites to the team for upcoming meetings
- **Ashley** will attend MCC's Student Professional Day Conference and report back to the team.
- **Ashley** will develop initial focus group questions and questions for the MA Community College Career Counselor Association meeting and send them out to the team for review and additions
- **Ashley** will send out notes to the group about NACELink and the user's perspective
- **Goal Team** will help develop questions for the upcoming focus group about NACELink and for the Massachusetts Community College Career Counselor's Association meeting being at NECC on June 7th.
- **Ashley** will have Beth Donovan post the minutes to Strategic Plan webpage
<http://facstaff.necc.mass.edu/vision-and-planning-initiatives/strategic-planning/strategic-goals-2012-2015/goal-4-improve-student-career-preparation/>

Our next meeting TBD