



**Achieving the Dream Core Team/Strategic Plan Goal Two Meeting  
Joint Meeting with NECC Student Senate**

**November 19, 2014 - 3:00 pm, TC103A Haverhill / L244 Lawrence**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:** B. Heineman, R. Lizotte, L. Nadeau, K. Mitchell, J. Rogers, P Schade, C. Cohen, L. Gagnon, K. Kortz, P. Dulchinos, G. Young, G. Nash, E. Gonzalez, M. Farrell  
**Recorded by:** D. LaValley

**Student Senate:** D. Brown (staff), S. Bryszkowski (staff), Student Senate: D. Passemato (President), W. Polo, K. de Ferrier Carvalho, J. Sebagisha C. Pringle, M. O'Connell, S. Beverage, L. Eyssallenne, J. Polanco, J. Collado, K. Curry  
**Guest:** Chad Gorham from The Observer

- 1. Introductions:** Attendees introduce themselves along with their role at the college.
- 2. Background on Goal Team 2 - (Bill Heineman)**

Bill thanked everyone for attending and appreciated the opportunity for the college's strategic goal 2 team to meet with student senate. We are trying to get student feedback and would like to meet regularly at least once a year.

Bill gave a brief overview of goal team 2: The College has been committed to student success throughout its history.

- The College first joined Achieving the Dream seven years ago to improve student academic performance and reduce gaps in that performance between different groups of students through the use of data.
- We examine the challenges students are facing and design strategies to meet to meet those challenges?

In 2012, with the launch of a new college strategic plan, this Achieving the Dream Core Team became the Strategic Goal 2 Team. Goal 2 is one of the 5 goals and is to improve student learning and achievement rates.

- Some examples we have worked on to strengthen students' academic performance as we looked at data is that we knew math is the biggest single academic challenge.

- We enhanced tutoring and launched Supplemental Instruction (SI).
- We divided math curriculum into multi pathways.
- Before we made any of these changes, roughly half of students were successful transitioning from developmental math to college-level math. By last year that had jumped to about 75%.
- We now have three sub teams that are part of Goal Team 2.
  - 1) First-Year experience: Which includes two main strategies: Starfish Early Success (idea is to catch students who are struggling as soon as possible) and the College Success Seminar.
  - 2) Culture and Equity: Aims to reduce gaps in academic performance between different groups of students.
  - 3) Transitions to Academic Success: Which is working on improving student reading skills in gateway courses.

### 3. Topics for Discussion:

Bill asked the Student Senate to reflect on what is working at the college?

#### Student Senators Response:

Math Fusion program has really helped in algebra and trigonometry as when you have a full math class of 32 students in a regular classroom and then go to another math classroom and there are 8 students at a time, you get more individual time.

Academic strategies we are using have been helpful: PACE, Smart thinking (online tutoring have been great). I learned how to write an essay and recommendation letters. They help you transition to a pathway to another college. I have submitted two papers for scholarships and have received positive feedback.

In Linda Murphy's (Modularized Math) class, additional tutors in the class and helps with more individual attention in the math class.

What is the impact on students with all this help in math when they move on to a 4 year College? There is a line between help and preparing. Janice Rogers responded in saying that part of the work in the developmental area is to create independent learners and for the students to take charge of their goals and learn what strategies work for them. Supports exist at 4 year institutions. Peter Dulchinos responded that we are trying to build confidence and you might not be totally ready, but there are supports in other areas. Karen Mitchell stated that in Pace we work on scholarships and they learn the process.

It is nice to have Introductory courses like chemistry, etc. that are not in a 4 year college. Nice to have that before you get into the 4 college.

Devotion by the faculty. The dedication of the college is unprecedented and helps build self-esteem. Faculty can make you or break you. I have had professors that have done both as I attended other colleges. This is not the case at NECC and is the heart of this college!

The Time Management, Public Speaking workshops. I have really learned a lot with the offerings. The “me” before and “me” now has really changed!

Areas where we can improve to help students succeed academically?

Implementation of Common Core philosophy. Education has a lot of changes as a whole, The Department of Ed, budget, and many things change rapidly without explanations. A lot more classes result in more projects and this is not a smooth transition. Some of the common core failed drastically are not an indicative of the student or college. She is not a good tester and to make so much dependent on testing scores it is not fair to the students, faculty and starting to tear colleges apart.

When I speak to students who come to the student center, they feel because it is not a 4 year college, that they are not part of the college. I think maybe improve more efforts into the community, more activities with more of a learning way. Conversation about history, change the mindset.

Sounds like there has been great progress with the math program. Sequences in courses, there is a gap in prerequisite courses and the next level course and often when you come in for the next course. A student takes 101 and they can't move into 102, the student is less prepared by the time they can get into a 102 class. It depends on the professor sometimes as well.

What they hear is that classes that are taught as a lecture in math is where they get lost. There are different learning abilities. Maybe a mini class to see if they fit in that class. It is not one size fits all. Some students don't know what their learning style is. Maybe do something for every student like what the leadership does. Mini workshop of different styles of math.

Have the ability to get to students their specific learning styles... is not one size fits all.

Have the ability to go to website to check on a professor and their teaching style. When students going to sign up for classes, they know which professor is a better fit for their learning style.

### **Proposal for Required First Year Experience Course**

Kirsten stated the idea of all incoming students with no academic history and have less than 12 credits are required to take FYE (CSS). This course introduces resources of the college, strengths and familiarizes college activities and getting to know people right up front.

Student questions/comments: Can student take the class before they come here? Can they take it in the summer prior to their fall semester? It is getting students aware of it will be a challenge.

It shouldn't be required and asked the rationale for this course.

A) It should be less expensive as students will not have to repeat a course. It is a good idea! Many students say that it will give students a foundation in ways to accomplish their goals. It is a 3 credit course.

How will that impact the students to ability to complete and finish their path?

A) It will fill that open free elective. Understand there are some programs that don't have the space 3 credits into their program. We are working with teachers to embed FYS into their courses, such as engineering. We are working on that now.

This student took the course and she stated "It was one of the best courses I have taken." It taught her the Cornell Style Strategy and it helped her with the note taking, as well as, a reading techniques. Using techniques in science courses and it was helpful. It was an eye opener.

If a high school student took this course in high school, is it counted?

A) We do offer the course in high schools and that would meet the requirements.

In closing, Bill asked, "For the most part the Student Senate is for the implementation of the class."

### **Reactions to a "One Book" Activity**

Marcy stated we are looking to adopt "One Book" that faculty, staff, students will read. Thinking how we can do this and everyone has a share. One idea is a geographic region around the world. There is a place in every class.

*Thoughts from Senators:*

- How much will the book will cost the students?
  - A) Usually a \$15-20 range. Not every class will use the book but will have the discussion of the place for example.
- It is a good idea. How will the faculty incorporate this into their syllabus? Do they like that idea? Will they have to make room for it?
  - A) "Ask and look for volunteers" model right now. Faculty like doing new things and talking to faculty in a different disciplines. Opportunities of having more speakers and the whole college is looking at 1 region.
- Loves this idea, sounds great but traditional courses are so rushed, will it be at the discretion of the faculty to do what they want with it?
  - A) Math class does data analysis and instead they will use data from the chosen region, not changing or adding the class just using different data content and connecting it. The goal is not to add work on faculty or student, just shift it a little.
- Do you have an example from another college that uses this and how successful it is?
  - A) BHCC uses this model and Westfield state has a 1 book made be exclusive to English program.

### **1. Submitted Student Senate Questions:**

- Does the school personally call students who (1) drop out of a program, and (2) drop out of a program, to find out why? If not, does a system of this sort implement a better relationship between college and students? Yes, this is part of what FYE does, purposes of the course is transition to college and helping
  - a) Gisela responded that it is the idea behind Starfish is to do just that. Students in the cohorts receive a daily alert from the instructors.
- Why does NECC not have a Career Center?
  - a) Bill responded that through Career Planning and Advising Center does a good job in helping choose the academic major. What we have been missing is internship, co-ops and employers. We are moving towards stronger career support. Several faculty working on an internship pilot in business, journalism, and computer science. We are offering a lot of workshops through NECCLink. We are making progress, but we don't have the full career center and might be heading to a full career center.
  - a) Grace talks to students about what the career they want to have when they finish school. Advising is up front. We have relationships with the advisory boards. One of the challenges with a career center it requires a lot of staff. NECCLink allows employers to post jobs in the software and allows students to put their resumes up. NECC link is explained during a 2 hour long New Student Orientation. There is so much information for a student to digest. Communication overload is something we deal with and urge your peers to seek out and be informed about it.

*A follow up question:* How are we advertising NECCLink? She is only aware because she is in the Student Success Center. What other ways can we share information about NECCLink in student orientation?

- Many students at a community college have a hard time adjusting because there is a very wide range of backgrounds. From never focusing on academics in high school to students returning to college after taking years off. Would it be possible, or successful, to implement a mentoring program where students and faculty can be assigned to help a new or returning student take advantage of the most significant benefits of NECC? (Students who mentor would be highly involved and last year students)
  - a) Yes we are considering this strategy as research suggests it can make a difference. Challenges in a mentoring program in a 2 year colleges is you are constantly in the mode of finding news mentors.

*A follow up question:* Do the mentors have to be enrolled at NECC?

- a) A great idea is to tap into alumni or others in the community.

- Do low GPA students need to seek support or does the school find these individuals?  
Could NECC perhaps implement a system or program that teaches leadership and opportunities for these students so their academic life is not ruined?
  - a) Kirsten responded, yes as this is part of FYE.

**Other Business:**

Meeting adjourned @ 4:06 p.m.

**Next meeting is December 3<sup>rd</sup> in SC213 @ 3:00 with ATD Coaches**

- Scheduled Agenda Item: New Overall High School Math GPA State Regulation