



Strategic Goal #4: Improve Student Career Preparation

April 27, 2012 L 144

Attending: Co-leader Dawna Perez, members Jason Bohanan, Christine DeRosa, Euthemia Gilman, Nita Lamborghini, Deb LaValley, Josefina Taveras and guests Clare Thompson, Kirsten Kortz, Joshua Abreu, and Sue Grolnic

Clare Thompson and Kirsten Kortz came to visit our team to speak about the College Success Seminar course and brought hard copies of the Goals/Outcomes/Skills that Demonstrate Outcomes/Activities & Assignments that meet the objective and Assessment tools to measure successful completion of each objective. Dawna and Christine DeRosa have extra copies. We went through some of the document picking out elements that address much of the career preparation topics that our team has discussed to date.

It was emphasized that many times we must ***make the connections overtly*** for the students as to how their class links to a career or future goals. The CSS class does pre- and post- surveys on every goal for the students. Almost everything they do is done in the context of their own vision for themselves and their own goals. There is a reflective piece, and lots of self-assessment to hone in on how a student's strengths and learning styles align with potential careers.

Joshua Abreu spoke from the perspective of the Student Success Center, and the goal of building self-awareness and self-confidence through support and extra help students get at the Center. We make it so students can't "hide" ---we teach, help and offer...but hold the students ultimately accountable. A great many of our students work, but don't necessarily have a reference point as to how to build a pathway to a career goal. Giving students a global perspective of the world (awareness of cultural, historical, and political diversity) allows them to understand where they come from and where they have the ability to go.

Now that CSS has opened up to more students, it will have 46 sections in the fall, potentially reaching 1,000 students. The classes will be thematic, so students can self-select into a section that interests them. Many of the most successful sections were Learning Communities, which operationalizes the transferable skills attained, and provides an opportunity for students to 'own their knowledge'.

The College Reading requirement has been taken away, so now students in Basic Writing can take the class. If students have fewer than 12 non-ESL credits but are not in developmental courses, they can still take the College Success course as a free elective. The conversation continues with Grace Young as to *how* to expand CSS so that *everyone needs to take it*---it's not an easy process, but that is the long-term goal.

Another aspect of connecting school with careers is the emphasis in the Academic Master plan of experiential learning, which can take place in several ways: Community Service, Service Learning, Coops, Internships, etc. and also entrepreneurial ventures that are supported through Campus Catalyst via the Merrimack Valley Sandbox Initiative. There is a movement at the federal level to incentivize schools to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship (which is just as much of a mindset and skill set as it is a concrete action). More to come on that topic, I'm sure.

Dawna will be meeting on May 9 with our Merrimack College Fellow, Ashley Bragger, who is interested in our Goal Team's topic and will be able to work with us from September to June doing whatever we'd like her to do. She will be able to dedicate between 20-25 hours per week to us. We should be sure to formalize a plan for her to execute for the fall.

The next meeting will be determined via Doodle poll. Please be sure to fill out your availability. You've received the link via email, but here it is again. <http://www.doodle.com/u4e2rbs97sqnz6aq>