

## Strategic Goal #4: Improve Student Career Preparation

June 19, 2013 L244

**Attending:** Co-leaders Chuck Phair and Dawna Perez, members Ashley Bragger, Andrea McPherson-Mesa, Lindsey Mayo, Nita Lamborghini, Deb LaValley, Josefina Taveras, George Moriarty, Silvia Serrano, and Niurka Aybar

### UPDATES

**Workshops:** There is a great deal of collaboration happening with multiple groups at the college around workshops. On the Career Services website, all career related workshops will be listed, regardless of who is facilitating. All groups have agreed to make their workshops available to all students. We are working with Andrea on an online registration form to help us track the number of registrants. These registrations will ultimately be gathered in an Excel spreadsheet with all the workshops listed. Some workshops will need to have caps because they can get fairly large. However, that number may differ from those who actually attend. Currently, each department has their own evaluation forms for their workshops which are given to students after they attend. The goal team has not yet determined how to evaluate the workshops. There are pros and cons to evaluations. For example, survey responses tend to be low, and with paper evaluations, students don't always feel comfortable being honest when the facilitator is in the room.

The team has been informed that Valley Works in Haverhill is closing due to funding issues. NECC has offered to have them on campus temporarily. They will be offering workshops while they are here. Although some of the workshops will be specifically for unemployed individuals, others may be relevant for our students. Part of our negotiation with them includes allowing our students to attend their workshops. This will not be effective until August and George will keep us in the loop. Regardless, our website should have a link to them as a community resource.

A master schedule of all the workshops was circulated to the team. The fall is really packed. Currently, spring is lighter, but we still need to factor in other area's workshops. Also, spring will be a time to host larger group interactive events such as a TJX student fashion show, mock interviews, and a job day.

**Website:** For this project we have an internal deadline of November, in order for MARCOM to have all the information ready for a March roll out. However, we also want to get the workshops up and listed on the site prior to the rest of the site going live. We have another deadline of July 22<sup>nd</sup> for this project. By this date, we need all decisions about workshop postings to be made. Chuck mentioned that in his department, he has workshops planned with local business leaders who are coming in October to talk to students about soft skills and professionalism. As soon as we have more details, it would be great to add those workshops to the post. As we move forward we need to consider how to get this information out to faculty, because there are a lot of faculty who are unaware of what is going on with the goal team. Chuck said that he can discuss it at the Dean's meeting and can circulate the master schedule. This will help make faculty aware of our efforts to improve the workshops and hopefully, they can incorporate them into their syllabi.

The team also is looking into having an Alumni profile highlighted on the Career Services website. Our involvement with Alumni Relations is a natural collaboration with our goal team which will help us establish relationships with alumni in order to get them involved in a meaningful way. Also, by bringing

alumni to the forefront, we can highlight the value of an NECC education. If the team knows of alumni that should be highlights, please send to Ashley or Dawna. Other suggestions are NECC's Professor Ken Thomas of Natural Sciences, Niurka, and Chuck's wife, Demetra. We should consider calling it "Alumni Making a Difference."

**Community engagement:** Dawna explained how this new subcommittee connects to Goal 4's purpose. It's becoming clear that all of our students need exposure to the basic skills that they will need to be successful professionals. Experiential learning opportunities are tied to Goal 4 because they help students to develop the behaviors that we want our students to possess. Silvia has been receiving requests from the community about who to contact and where to make requests. Dawna saw this as a perfect opportunity to set up a collaboration meeting and to bring together Dina Brown, Silvia Serrano, Paula Richards, and Isabelle Gagne. The group will grow in the fall including several other faculty and staff who do this work across the college. The goal is to coordinate what the college is doing so that external partners will see more unification and opportunities for students to go out in the community. As faculty and students opt into doing service learning, we will be able to track this and see what partnerships are available to all stakeholders. The process will be more systemic, transparent to all students and faculty and will go a long ways in fortifying the strong relationships NECC has with its surrounding communities.

Paula and Silvia have been asked to lead this subcommittee. Eventually, if we move towards having a center, it should be more of a center for civic engagement, something that relates to career preparation and to other opportunities that students have to prepare them for the future. The important thing right now is to get traction for these ideas, build an efficient system, get everyone talking about it and participating in it so that the next time there is a strategic planning process, it may rise to goal level. Lindsey also has interest in community service and it is hoped that she becomes part of this group. This will roll out in the fall and to get involved, talked to Silvia or Paula.

**Focus group:** We sent out a quick survey to advisory board members and asked them who in their company would be the key hiring person. With this information, we invited people to participate in a focus group, which let us know how companies handle hiring and job posts. We may also be able to get more information from George's contacts on this subject. In the focus group, we also discussed career assessment tools and determined that although they found them interesting, they didn't think they were all that important to them as employers. None of them had heard about StrengthsQuest. We are still not sure that we should completely do away with MBTI and it remains to be seen whether or not Karletty will be trained in MBTI.

All focus group participants said that they would like a point of contact for employer posts. They also wanted to know our backup plan if we did not get NACELink funded. We also need to encourage faculty to direct students to our site, maybe it needs to be brought up at convocation. Again, we are waiting to hear about budget decisions before we develop a communication plan. Regardless, there does have to be a key point of contact for this project and currently, there is no position capable of taking on this role, without re-writing job descriptions.

**Budget news:** There is no news yet about budget decisions, we will need to wait until mid-July

#### **YEAR TWO THOUGHTS:**

Plan A would be ideal with proposed position and software being accepted. With this option we will keep moving forward at a moderate to aggressive pace, managing workshops, finishing website

coordination, communicating with faculty, controlling job posts, and working with students in applying. The system is not heavy on IT side, but does need someone to manage and have a relationship with employers.

Plan B would not be the worst case, as we could pull together funding from different areas to fund the system.

Plan C is an uncomfortable place to be because we would have the software but would not have anyone available to manage it. At this point, we would prefer not to bring this system online and instead designate someone to manage job postings on our own site set up by marketing, which may then take until next fall before it would be ready, given the queue of that department's projects.

Plan D would be worst case scenario and we would most likely be back at square one. We are asking the group to plan for the worst and to generate ideas from the group about where this responsibility could sit or who could be a designated person. Chuck said to talk with Sharon McDermot because she is looking at activities and who has available resources. Nora should also be a part of this conversation.

In terms of the workshops, we need to work together, particularly for the spring workshops, in reaching out to our contacts and inviting employers and community partners to participate.

For next year's meeting times we are looking at keeping the times on Friday morning and to rotate campuses. We will want to check with our members who are faculty and see if they have any conflicts. We will not be meeting in July or August, but Dawna will keep the team posted with any updates.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- **Ashley** will send Chuck the master workshop schedule to be circulated at the Dean's meeting
- **Chuck** will circulate the master workshop schedule to the Deans in an effort to let more faculty members know of what we are doing with career workshops.
- **Dawna** will keep the team notified about budget decisions
- **George** will update the team with information about Valley Works on the Haverhill campus and potential workshop offerings
- **Dawna** will send out fall meeting invites
- **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 will not be until September, enjoy your summer!!**