

May 2018 Update: Integrated Student Experience

Hello NECC Community,

The Integrated Student Experience **May Update**: What a Busy Semester!

The Integrated Student Experience is hitting full stride and there is so much to report we are going to skip the usual "Buzz" section in this update and get right to what's happening:

There are multiple, important developments in the **Center for Student Success (CSS)**:

- We are **developing an array of strategies to help new students, unsure of their academic and career plans, to pick a direction**. In many cases this may be as simple as a conversation with an advisor, a faculty member, or visits to Meta Major Centers. For some, however, it may take longer. For those students, **a new Exploratory Program** has been proposed that would provide intentionally-designed academic and career exploration within a cohort of peers also figuring out their goals. Once they do (hopefully within 15 credits), they will pick a meta major. **Staff and faculty raised excellent questions and important concerns about the plan**. For instance, an Exploratory Major can't be a place where students get stranded or stereotyped in negative ways. And each component of the program requires input from faculty in ALL the meta majors to assure that it can help students choose their direction wisely. **We will heed this advice**.
- Besides the work on the Exploratory Major, faculty from the Academic Preparation Department and Student affairs staff are deep into conversations about their role in the CSS next year. An important part of this work is **thinking through how students transition from the CSS to their chosen Meta Major Center**.
- Valley Works Career Center will be moving to the Opportunity Works Building this summer, which will allow **significant rearrangement of the Behrakis Student Center into a new Haverhill CSS by this fall**.
- The Education Advisory Board (**EAB**) is **reviewing our student processes and website** and will give us advice on simplifying and clarifying how we welcome new students and get them ready to succeed. This advice is part of a larger look at process and organizational planning within Student Affairs and the CSS.
- **The CSS will pilot some new approaches to Orientation this summer**. This is one step in the road toward a full revamp of the entry process students experience at the college.
- Over 500 responses have been received to a **Student Experience Perceptions Survey**, which will guide the work of the CSS going forward.

It has been an active month for the **Meta Major Centers** as well:

- Joining **Judi Ciampi**, who will again serve as faculty lead for the Center for Business and Accounting next year, are **Kathy Hudson** and **Dawn Wheaton** who will be co-leaders of the Center for Health Professions, **Deirdre Budzyna** who will serve as leader of the Center for Professional Studies, and **Trish Portanova** who has been elected leader of the Center for Liberal Arts. The Center for STEM is in the process of choosing its faculty leader. All of these faculty will join the ISE Implementation Alliance.
- We are gathering as much feedback as possible and discussing lessons learned from the first year of operations of the **Center for Business and Accounting**. Tina Favara led a **second student**

forum in the Center in April. A key lesson is that **faculty can use their courses as opportunities to introduce the Centers** to their students and encourage them to participate in center activities. Business faculty assured strong attendance for workshops and outside speakers by scheduling them during their classes and making attendance mandatory.

- Fall course registrations in the Business Transfer and Business Management programs are still up more than 5 percent even as overall fall enrollment for the college is down by over 5 percent. **Signing up for classes in the Meta Major Centers works!**
- A Health Professions student survey yielded 80 responses and **students expressed strong interest in accessing academic advising, Healthcare employer job fairs, financial aid guidance, and academic support in a Center for Health Professions.**

Various academic departments and programs are planning necessary summer work to be ready for the introduction of **Guided Curriculum Pathways** in the next academic year. **If you need to do such work and have not discussed it with your supervisor yet, please do so as soon as possible!** Lance Hidy continues to refine a template for an Academic Pathway Map and is working with a team of folks from around the college to pull as much information as possible automatically into the maps for each academic program so manual work involved in completing them is minimized.

The Implementation Alliance and Center for Business and Accounting are reviewing the results of course registration in the Center this spring, including the presence of professional academic advising and enrollment staff. Although **reforming our approach to academic advising** will be complex—particularly as we implement the EAB Navigate student lifecycle management software and the new Exploratory Major—and we will take our time, we want to learn everything we can from our experience this year to inform any experimentation we try with advising and course registration in the new academic year.

The ISE Goal Team leaders and Implementation Alliance began work on developing some draft **metrics to assess student progress** under the ISE several weeks ago. Further refinements to these drafts will occur over the summer and the metrics will be presented to the college community in the early fall for your feedback before they are finalized.

Finally, something else we will talk about more in the fall is **workload**. Perhaps the most common question I hear is, “How can we do the new things envisioned in the ISE without substantial new resources, especially time?” The answer is that we can’t, unless we STOP doing other things. The follow-on question is almost always, “So what will we stop doing?” Although I have some ideas about that, it is a decision we need to make as a community: it can’t come just from me. So, **I am asking everyone to ask out loud whether activities they are involved in are higher priority than helping our students succeed more consistently through the ISE.** Let’s talk it through and then let’s actually drop some of those other things. **We are NOT asking faculty and staff to add ISE related duties to their workloads without jettisoning other parts of their current duties.** The ISE can’t succeed if we are not serious about this refocus of our time and energy.

Beyond workload, the **emergent nature of the ISE**—the way forward and the end product are not always clear—can produce anxiety. But it also allows us to be flexible and adjust as we learn what is working. I appreciate your patience as we work together to help more students reach their goals.

Thank you to the growing number of students, faculty, staff and administrators contributing to the Integrated Student Experience. If you wish to join up, please email me at wheineman@necc.mass.edu.