Engaging Faculty and Staff in the Student Success Agenda: Case Studies from the Walmart Foundation PRESS for Completion Grant Program

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Community colleges are the pathways for millions of Americans to gain valuable education and to access career opportunities leading to family-sustaining wages. Faculty, student services staff, and administrators must share in the responsibility for student success if we are to meet national completion goals and reach even more students. To that end, Achieving the Dream, Inc. partnered with the Walmart Foundation on the PRESS (Persistence, Retention, and Student Success) for Completion grant.

Through this grant, Achieving the Dream selected 15 Leader Colleges to test and expand innovative faculty and staff engagement strategies and student success interventions. Over a 27-month period, these colleges received technical assistance from Achieving the Dream experts in the field and Achieving the Dream, Inc. to engage faculty and staff in fundamental institutional reform.

There were two interconnected goals for the Walmart Foundation PRESS for Completion grant. The first goal was to broaden and deepen faculty and staff engagement so that colleges achieved more significant, sustainable gains in student success and completion. The second goal was to develop the capacity for Achieving the Dream to scale grant strategies by developing a robust national peer-coaching model that will improve the transfer of knowledge from college to college.

This publication is intended to be used as a tool to help Achieving the Dream colleges understand and implement effective faculty and staff engagement strategies that promote student success. In addition to providing an inside look at the faculty and staff engagement work through the grant program, we synthesize primary lessons learned.

Because real stories are always helpful for colleges as they plan or refine their own faculty engagement efforts, this publication offers case studies on faculty and staff engagement in action at four of the PRESS for Completion colleges. We hope this guide proves timely and helpful as your college begins its journey to broaden and deepen faculty and staff engagement.
Nearly one-half of all students seeking higher education choose a community college. Fewer than half of those students earn credentials within six years. Community colleges – which serve large proportions of nontraditional, first-generation, low-income, and minority students – remain the nation’s gateways to good jobs for millions of students who dream of a better tomorrow. Yet too often these dreams are cut short.

According to a report by the Center on Education and the Workforce, America must produce an additional 20 million college-educated workers by 2025 to meet the economy’s needs and reverse the growth of income inequality. Continuing to under produce college-educated workers would increase the wage disparity from 74 percent to 96 percent. To reach national goals for an educated workforce and help students achieve their dreams, faculty, student services staff, and administrators must share in the responsibility for student success. Nearly 200 colleges across the nation have joined the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network. Each Achieving the Dream college develops and implements research-based policies and practices based on an analysis of its institutional strengths, problem areas, and achievement gaps. On the ground, participating colleges are expected to enact a five-step process of institutional reform.

1. Commit to institutional change and improvement.
2. Use data to identify achievement gaps, assets, and obstacles relevant to student success and to prioritize actions.
3. Design practices/policies.
4. Implement, evaluate, and improve practices/policies.
5. Sustain, continually improve, and validate practices/policies.

In the 2009 interim Achieving the Dream evaluation, MDRC and the Community College Research Center (CCRC) identified the potential for increasing student outcomes through faculty engagement. The report, titled *Turning the Tide: Five Years of Achieving the Dream in Community Colleges*, identified several vexing challenges in community college reform and aspects of the work that needed deeper thinking and greater focus.

While the culture of inquiry and evidence had taken root at nearly all of the colleges in the study, it was more prevalent among colleges with strong faculty and staff involvement in interventions and reform. In fact, colleges with faculty and staff professional development as well as structures that allowed for regular communication made the greatest strides in building a strong evidence-based approach. The report concluded with recommendations for next steps.

- Do more to involve adjunct and full-time faculty.
- Devote more attention to improving teaching and learning inside the classroom (especially developmental education classrooms).
- Pay more attention to scaling up promising initiatives to reach more students.
- Consider more proactive ways of supporting colleges that enter with very weak data capacity.
In 2011, Achieving the Dream, in partnership with Public Agenda, produced the report Engaging Adjunct and Full-Time Faculty in Student Success Innovation. Building on the interim Achieving the Dream evaluation, the purpose of this report was to help college leadership make strategic decisions about when and how to most constructively engage faculty as partners in institutional change. This report identified common obstacles to engagement from faculty and institutional perspectives.

FACULTY CHALLENGES

- **Heavy workloads.** Faculty members, particularly full-time faculty members, spend a lot of their time on administrative duties. Because activities associated with new promising practices are often labor-intensive, busy faculty may view new initiatives as add-ons to their regular duties or as unwanted distractions. Heavy workloads may make it more difficult to get faculty to participate in professional development opportunities.

- **Initiative overload undermines engagement.** Adjunct and full-time faculty are often recipients of best practices that feel like flavors of the month. Faculty members are more likely to engage in reform efforts seen as feasible and supported by institutional leadership.

- **Lack of intellectual connection and goal congruence.** Faculty members may not immediately see the connection between a new initiative and their personal/professional goals and commitments. Many successful engagement efforts have identified ways to help faculty relate new practices to their own values and beliefs.

- **Resistance to mandates from above.** Top-down efforts often give the impression that central leadership is insensitive or indifferent to faculty opinions, and lead to mistrust. Further, faculty members do not often support top-down efforts that do not seem lasting.

- **External, rather than internal focus.** Faculty members and staff are often, and increasingly, overwhelmed by a high volume of underprepared students or students who face a multitude of pressures. It becomes easy to look to the failings of the K-12 system or other external challenges as the source of the problems and solutions. Refocusing faculty on institutional change can be a challenge.

- **Lack of adjunct faculty integration.** Many colleges have yet to integrate adjunct faculty into institutional efforts or develop effective infrastructure and practices for communicating with them.

INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

- **Compensation, tenure, and promotion policies encourage old values over new ones among both adjunct and full-time faculty.** Institutional reward structures may present barriers to the adoption and implementation of new practices, and can be especially discouraging to those faculty who are less established and more sensitive to concerns about professional status.

- **An intervention’s deliverables may not be the kind in which adjunct and full-time faculty are most interested.** For example, the student data collected and produced through Achieving the Dream might not include all of the students they teach or might not directly address the leading concerns of faculty (e.g., student opinions of their past courses, instead of just student performance).

- **Faculty autonomy and governance cuts two ways.** A strongly autonomous faculty might be able to minimize structural constraints on faculty engagement (e.g., unfavorable hiring and promotion practices). However, a faculty culture that encourages autonomy might also protect instructors from pressures — whether from administrators, students, or peers — to adopt new practices or take on new responsibilities.

- **Leadership turnover/instability.** Frequent turnover in leadership threatens the stability of any new initiative and creates uncertainty about the stability and level of support that an initiative will receive.

- **Silos undermine engagement.** The existence of silos between departments, between types of faculty, and between staff and faculty limits communication and collaboration, and undermines efforts to
engage faculty as reliable partners in institutional change efforts.

Informed by several layers of research and deliberation, this report provided a framework and principles and practices for helping colleges improve faculty engagement.

**A FRAMEWORK OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE FIVE-STEP PROCESS**

- When making the commitment to institutional change and improvement, it is important to **exercise leadership** that inspires a willingness among adjunct and full-time faculty to become active partners in the difficult and often uncomfortable work of change.
- When using data to assess achievement gaps and decide on specific interventions, invest in institutional research capacity to **create both a culture of evidence and a culture of engagement**, one that treats full-time and adjunct faculty as valuable partners in making sense of data.
- When designing strategies, **provide the resources, incentives, and recognition** for full-time and adjunct faculty to engage intensively as tactical partners on the front line of institutional change.
- When implementing, evaluating, and improving strategies, **institutionalize expectations and opportunities for continuous engagement** in order to deepen full-time and adjunct faculty commitment to change efforts.
- When creating the conditions for sustainability and continuous improvement, work to **span silos and nurture a college culture that is inquiry-based, collaborative, and transparent**.

With over 200 institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams – working throughout 34 states and the District of Columbia – the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network positions community colleges to make systemic improvements to increase student success. While the improvements are encouraging, the circle of faculty and student services personnel most engaged in the work is small compared to the total number of faculty and staff at the colleges, leaving many students unreached. Further, the reform work has not yet eliminated silos between academic and student services departments.

Greater numbers of faculty and staff must become more engaged in the student success agenda so that both classroom and student services reforms reach significantly greater numbers of students. Achieving the Dream’s vision is that more and, eventually, most faculty and staff will have the capacity and commitment to use student outcome data to improve teaching, advising, and support for students. This vision led to the development and implementation of the Walmart Foundation PRESS (Persistence, Retention, and Student Success) for Completion grant program.

**References**


While the need for increased engagement of faculty and staff in student success reforms at community colleges is widely accepted, colleges nationwide continue to struggle to increase the depth and breadth of engagement among their employees, particularly those who work part time.

If these reform efforts are going to be effective in helping us produce an additional 20 million college-educated students by 2025, we must drastically increase the proportion of faculty and staff engaged in the work on the ground. This need was the impetus for the creation of the PRESS for Completion grant program.

Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges, known for their commitment to student-centered evidence-based reforms and outstanding increases in student outcomes, were the ideal network of colleges for testing and expanding innovative faculty and staff engagement strategies and student success interventions. In 2012, Achieving the Dream released a request for proposals to the 50 eligible Leader Colleges in its network. After an intensive review process involving experienced coaches, Achieving the Dream chose 15 colleges to receive grants.

1. Aiken Technical College (Aiken, SC)
2. Alamo Colleges (San Antonio, TX)
3. Brazosport College (Lake Jackson, TX)
4. Community College of Beaver County (Monaca, PA)
5. Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland, OH)
6. Durham Technical Community College (Durham, NC)
7. Guilford Technical Community College (Jamestown, NC)
8. Northampton Community College (Bethlehem, PA)
9. Northern Essex Community College (Haverhill, MA)
10. Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College (Orangeburg, SC)
11. Pulaski Technical College (North Little Rock, AR)
12. Roxbury Community College (Boston, MA)
13. Tallahassee Community College (Tallahassee, FL)
14. Valencia College (Orlando, FL)
15. Yakima Valley Community College (Yakima, WA)

Achieving the Dream tasked PRESS for Completion grant recipients with implementing broad and substantive faculty and staff engagement strategies to increase the number of faculty and staff involved in Achieving the Dream reform efforts at their institutions. Achieving the Dream encouraged PRESS colleges to be innovative in their approaches, particularly as they related to engaging adjunct faculty.

It was also made clear at the start that true engagement must go far beyond just professional development. While professional development is a necessary part of engagement, it cannot be the end. For engagement to
be broad, deep, and sustainable, colleges must provide opportunities for their employees to get involved in the reform process at all stages—from data analysis through brainstorming solutions to initiative implementation.

Although enabled to use a variety of engagement strategies, PRESS colleges were required to complete the following activities.

- Examine the current level of faculty and staff engagement in the institution’s Achieving the Dream reform efforts and set baseline measures for faculty and staff engagement.
- Analyze current levels of student success outcomes at the institution and the impact of faculty and staff engagement on these outcomes.
- Form and convene Thinking Teams to further refine their plans and review data related to student success.
- Implement innovative engagement strategies to broaden the involvement of faculty and staff (including adjunct and part-time) in the Achieving the Dream reform work at the institution.
- Facilitate two Big Meetings (large convocations or whole-college summits) in fall 2012 and fall 2013, as a mechanism for involving more faculty and staff in institutional reform.
- Track, report on, and evaluate student outcomes and faculty and staff engagement outcomes.
- Lead faculty and staff in cross-college working groups in analyzing student outcomes and identifying and developing additional institutional reform needed to increase these outcomes. These workgroups would then assess the success of revised policies, procedures, and/or pedagogies and refine the implementation in the 2013-2014 academic year.
- Produce detailed case studies and quantitative evaluations of the work completed during the grant cycle.
- Participate in Achieving the Dream’s social media campaign to engage student voices in institutional reform work.

To support and guide their efforts, each PRESS college received guidance from Achieving the Dream’s technical assistants (TA). The TAs were selected from Achieving the Dream’s pool of Leadership Coaches—community college experts who establish trusting relationships with the chief executive, his or her leadership group, the core team, and all other work groups in the colleges. Each TA worked with three of the PRESS colleges to advise on strategies for deepening faculty and staff engagement, facilitating team discussions, assisting in the development of evaluation plans, and helping to design and coordinate strategy sessions, work groups, and large convocations.

Peer-to-peer learning was another key component of the PRESS for Completion grant. Achieving the Dream provided many opportunities for PRESS colleges to learn from each other at key stages in the grant cycle through learning events, webinars, and conference calls. For example, in July 2012, all PRESS colleges and TAs attended an Achieving the Dream-hosted kickoff in Reston, Virginia. Attendees received professional development in data and evaluation, worked across the colleges in facilitated discussions about their PRESS goals and strategies, and spent valuable time working with their team on developing their PRESS work plan. Additional in-person meetings were held at various national conferences throughout the grant period. Finally, Achieving the Dream also assisted institutions in developing tracking, evaluation, and monitoring tools to assure the work informed the larger Achieving the Dream National Reform Network and, most importantly, increased student success.

To maximize the impact of the grant, the selected colleges worked with Achieving the Dream to disseminate the lessons they learned and identified promising practices across the Achieving the Dream Network. Part of this responsibility required grantees to prepare to become peer coaches to other Achieving the Dream institutions. Peer-coaching strategies included, but were not limited to, local, regional, and national phone calls, webinars,
emails, seminars, workshops, presentations, and site visits. To disseminate promising practices, selected colleges produced detailed case studies and quantitative evaluations of the work completed during the grant cycle. A sample of these case studies is available in Part Two.

Aiken Technical College (AIKEN, SC)

*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2007*

**PRESS Goal:** To create a culture of student success whereby all faculty and staff participate in the process of identifying challenges and developing strategies to increase retention and gateway course success.

**Strategy:** Aiken Technical College (Aiken) began its PRESS for Completion work by designing and distributing a survey to its students with the hopes of identifying the key challenges that cause students to drop out or stop out of college. The results were disaggregated and shared broadly to prepare the college community for the coming discussions. In fall 2012, Aiken conducted more than 20 focus groups of faculty and staff to solicit a range of possible strategies to increase gateway course success and retention. The college created two major work teams to select and implement some of these strategies. Examples of chosen strategies included a writing center, COMPASS preparation, peer tutoring, and online enhancements/supports for existing courses. Throughout this process, Aiken worked to increase adjunct instructor engagement by ensuring they were recruited into the focus groups and by offering small stipends for participation in the Faculty Academy program.

Alamo Colleges (SAN ANTONIO, TX)

*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2004*

**PRESS Goal:** To provide support towards deepening the engagement and participation of full-time and adjunct faculty in the continual improvement of student success in the classroom.

**Strategy:** The five Alamo Colleges chose to focus their PRESS work on engaging all faculty in developing innovative teaching and learning practices. The work began with faculty members developing a new faculty teaching description that incorporated the need to: continuously improve their teaching and learning strategies, actively engage and advise students, pursue professional development, and participate in cross-department and cross-college service activities. The colleges then developed a comprehensive faculty enrichment program to help full and part-time faculty address the new competencies laid out in their job descriptions. This was innovative for Alamo Colleges in three key ways. First, it focused on teaching and learning strategies. Second, a heavy emphasis was placed on outlining professional development requirements and opportunities for adjunct faculty. Third, this program called for all five colleges within Alamo Colleges to work together to provide one set of professional development expectations and opportunities.

Brazosport College (LAKE JACKSON, TX)

*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2006*

**PRESS Goal:** To broaden engagement in the college’s equity agenda beyond isolated departments and create a true culture of equity.

**Strategy:** President Millicent Valek began Brazosport College’s PRESS work by conducting small group discussions involving workers at all levels – from faculty and staff to maintenance personnel – to find out how each individual was working to promote student success. Brazosport College then empowered leaders among
the faculty and staff to take the engagement to the next level. A full-time faculty member worked closely with the library director to design and launch the Gaining Achievement through Organized Reading (GATOR) program, a college-wide reading and discussion program. GATOR participants spent their first year (2012-2013) examining the causes and consequences of poverty, moving to focus on the structural inequities connected with race and ethnicity in its second year. In addition to the voluntary GATOR program, the college mandated other professional development events for full-time faculty, including a workshop on Skip Downing’s On Course student success program and a three-hour Community Action Poverty Simulation designed to help faculty “walk a mile in the shoes” of low-income students.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BEAVER COUNTY (MONACA, PA)

Joined Achieving the Dream in 2006

PRESS Goal: To redesign the college’s new student orientation and developmental mathematics courses.

Strategy: The leadership at Community College of Beaver County (CCBC) harnessed the power of Design Thinking, creating realistic student personas to increase faculty and staff understanding of student needs and aspirations. After the PRESS grant kickoff event, CCBC identified key individuals from across the college to participate in their newly developed Faculty, Administrator, Staff, and Trustees (F.A.S.T.) Academy. Those involved interviewed students to identify their expectations, needs, and aspirations, and then use this knowledge to design an innovative, responsive, and efficient educational experience for their students. The personas were used to increase the personalization of the new student orientation event through an intensive workshop that included faculty, administrators, students, staff, and trustees. Additionally, the F.A.S.T. Academy team worked with the developmental mathematics department to design supports, both in and out of the classroom, for students struggling to complete their required modules. Every department at CCBC now has its own set of persona cards, and the whole college community uses the language presented in the personas.

CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (CLEVELAND, OH)

Join Achieving the Dream in 2005

PRESS Goal: To integrate four independent student success initiatives and help faculty improve their students’ reading ability.

Strategy: Cuyahoga Community College’s (Tri-C) Reading Specialist developed a series of videos that demonstrated contextualized reading across the disciplines engaged in the four separate student success efforts (biology, business, English, and mathematics). She then worked with faculty in those departments to create videos guiding students through the process of previewing a text, annotating it, rereading it, highlighting information, taking notes, and using graphics, graphs, tables, and charts to assist in subject mastery. In addition to the reading guides, Tri-C’s biology faculty launched review sessions to provide additional support to students in introductory biology courses. Business faculty held events designed to foster a sense of community among their students and faculty, and developed an electronic portfolio to help students prepare for their job search by documenting major learning achievements. The English department hosted a reading summit for all faculty to increase the awareness of the importance of reading skills. Finally, faculty in the mathematics department began building a culture of responsibility for one’s learning through the integration of student success skills into the curriculum.
PRESS ENGAGEMENT WORK

DURHAM TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE (DURHAM, NC)

*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2004*

**PRESS Goal:** To increase the participation of adjunct faculty in discussions about student success in the classroom, and encourage dialogue and cooperation across departments, particularly between faculty and student services.

**Strategy:** To implement this work successfully, President William Ingram empowered the coordinator of the college’s professional development center for faculty, who herself is a longtime faculty member at Durham Tech, to lead the work. The college implemented engagement strategies designed to reach larger number of employees, such as Big Meetings, and made sure to invite all adjunct faculty, offering a small stipend for their attendance. However, they also offered more detailed opportunities for engagement through faculty Thinking Teams focused on analyzing student success data for previously identified high-risk courses, workshops on various topics targeted at all faculty and staff, and peer social media ambassadors to engage students in the work as well.

GUILFORD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE (JAMESTOWN, NC)

*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2004*

**PRESS Goal:** To engage part-time faculty and students in career planning.

**Strategy:** The PRESS team at Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) used technology as the vehicle by which they could increase engagement among students as well as faculty, particularly adjuncts, who often hold second jobs that reduce the amount of time they can spend on campus. They held informational meetings and developed instruction sheets to train faculty on the new technology, and encouraged them to include career-focused assignments in their courses. Through the input of adjuncts involved in the technology pilot, the team found that it was best to identify the professional development activities that could benefit adjuncts the most and focus on increasing engagement in those rather than trying to encourage participation in all PRESS professional development activities.

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE (BETHLEHEM, PA)

*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2006*

**PRESS Goal:** To engage full and part-time faculty in designing and implementing student success strategies for its mathematics and English gateway courses.

**Strategy:** The PRESS team at Northampton Community College (NCC) knew that for a strategy to have meaningful impact, it had to be scalable. As a result, the design teams ensured their chosen strategy could be implemented at full scale immediately. In order for the strategies to take root, they needed to be designed and implemented by faculty and advisors. Consequently, the Thinking Teams were comprised of full- and part-time faculty and advising faculty who were provided enough release time to lead the changes. Students in the English gateway course completed a reading/writing assessment the first day of class and instructors followed up with individual conferences with students during the third week of the semester. Students in Introduction to Statistics took a first day mathematics quiz and answered a college readiness questionnaire. Faculty members had individual conferences with the five students they were most concerned about based on the assessments. Additionally, all students were given a follow up success packet and directed to meet with the statistics tutor in the learning center during the first two weeks of class.
NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE (HAVERHILL, MA)
Joined Achieving the Dream in 2007

PRESS Goal: To engage additional departments in the expansion of the college’s first-year experience course to rebrand it as a college-level course rather than a class for those in developmental education.

Strategy: Northern Essex Community College (NECC) piloted its College Success Seminar (CSS), a first-year experience course, with students testing into developmental education as part of its original Achieving the Dream work. After proving initially successful, the college attempted to scale CSS to make it available to all students. However, as a result of the pilot target group, the program had unintentionally developed a reputation for being a developmental education class. Therefore, NECC chose to focus its PRESS efforts on redefining this reputation with the goal of scaling CSS to all its first-year students. Using an appreciative inquiry approach, the college found that the curriculum was viewed as too light in content for college-level and too focused on the emotional aspects of college success rather than the academic aspects (such as study skills, time management, etc.). Additionally, the project coordinator in charge of CSS prepared a presentation to dispel myths about the course and share its goals and successes, and held follow-up forums to ensure no question or concern was left unaddressed.

ORANGEBURG-CALHOUN TECHNICAL COLLEGE (ORANGEBURG, SC)
Joined Achieving the Dream in 2007

PRESS Goal: To actively incorporate adjunct faculty into the new, intensive advising system.

Strategy: Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College (OC Tech) directed its PRESS for Completion efforts towards redesigning its advising system so students were provided with as much support and true advising as needed. Key to achieving this goal was providing effective professional development for advisors and incorporating faculty into the process, particularly adjuncts, who were often provided little training on how to help students access the college’s services. OC Tech developed a handbook, orientation class, and mentoring process to build the knowledge of college services among adjunct faculty. Additionally, the college also selected – and financially compensated – a group of adjuncts who taught students with high advising needs and provided intensive training in the practices and technology needed for effective advising. To provide additional support and increase communications with adjuncts, OC Tech altered the job description of the dean of the online college to include the role of dean of adjuncts as an informed ally. New responsibilities included maintaining regular two-way communication with adjuncts, encouraging use of the adjunct faculty office, and dealing with adjunct concerns or questions.

PULASKI TECHNICAL COLLEGE (NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR)
Joined Achieving the Dream in 2007

PRESS Goal: To develop processes and structures to increase communication between departments and offices at the college in a sustainable way.

Strategy: Pulaski Technical College (PTC) realized that no intervention could be successful in an environment full of silos and low levels of communication. Therefore, the college focused its PRESS efforts on creating a culture of collaboration and participatory decision making. PTC launched its PRESS for Completion work by holding a mandatory convocation for all college employees, the first one since the late 1990s. This was quickly followed by a successful adjunct faculty convocation and the creation of a representative Quality Council, which
provided a participatory management system for quality improvement projects. Additionally, PTC established smaller Quality Improvement teams, where each team member received training in collaborative decision-making and consensus building.

ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (BOSTON, MA)
*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2007*

**PRESS Goal:** To embed success coaches, drawn from the college’s adjunct faculty pool, into developmental and gateway courses.

**Strategy:** As part of its Achieving the Dream work, Roxbury Community College (RCC) piloted the traditional peer-tutoring method of supplemental instruction. However, due to an overwhelming number of students needing such support, the college struggled to find enough students to act as tutors. In fall 2012, with the help of their PRESS TA, RCC redesigned its supplemental instruction model to leverage the skills of its adjunct faculty to provide more students with needed supports. The new success coaches worked with faculty teaching developmental and gateway courses to support the students, including meeting with the students regularly to tailor the support to the students’ specific needs. Three aspects of the program design were critical to its effectiveness: the collaboration between instructor and success coaches as they support each student, inclusion of the success coach in the course curriculum, and the success coach helping students find resources.

TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TALLAHASSEE, FL)
*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2004*

**PRESS Goal:** To improve success rates and reduce the achievement gaps in mathematics.

**Strategy:** TCC began its work by hosting two Big Meetings – one for full-time faculty and staff and the other for adjunct faculty – to introduce the challenge and goal to the college community. More detail, including copious amounts of data, was shared with the specific departments to be involved in the reform efforts, including the mathematics department, developmental education department, and student affairs. Adjunct faculty were pleased to be encouraged to participate in return for a small stipend. Two faculty members reassigned their time to lead the project while the other team members – comprised of faculty from various departments, staff, and students – participated in addition to their regular duties. The team chose simple strategies to address the problem. Most importantly, the team developed a common language to use within and between departments and to provide consistent, clear messages to students.

VALENCIA COLLEGE (ORLANDO, FL)
*Joined Achieving the Dream in 2004*

**PRESS Goal:** To increase faculty and staff engagement in redesigning its Student Life Skills course, focusing on new hires and departments not directly involved in the reform efforts.

**Strategy:** Valencia College used its PRESS for Completion grant to redesign its new student experience course with the goal of providing more guidance to students as they begin their journey at the college. To elicit high levels of buy in and to obtain a variety of perspectives to enrich the discussions, the college assembled staff and faculty from across many departments to lead the PRESS work. Additionally, Valencia’s leadership aligned the PRESS work with the college’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) during its Big Meetings so the whole college community understood the redesigned, mandatory student experience course was part of the bigger college
improvement strategy. Most of the PRESS team’s first year was spent listening to the needs and challenges facing their students through focus groups and facilitating workshops with faculty focused on curriculum development and the new course outcomes. By gathering feedback, PRESS leadership distilled key themes and outcomes necessary for the new student orientation course, and developed a common lesson plan. Once this had been designed, faculty (both full and part-time) who would be teaching the new course received a full-day training session to ensure the new outcomes and the course’s role in the college’s QEP were well understood. After the successful pilot phase, the college began working to scale the course to reach more students.

YAKIMA VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (YAKIMA, WA)
Joined Achieving the Dream in 2006

PRESS Goal: To engage 100 percent of college faculty and student services staff in redesigning and delivering advising to all students.

Strategy: Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) chose to focus its PRESS efforts on expanding its existing student success efforts focused on providing support and guidance to new students at the college. PRESS leadership created a mandatory advising program for all students with less than 30 college-level credits, encouraging new faculty leaders to take responsibility for the redesign. The dean of workforce education was selected to lead the work with others coming from counseling, basic skills instruction, workforce, and transfer education, and other student success efforts. Additionally, six groups – faculty group, staff group, student group, web page group, tracking advising contacts group, and an academic early warning group – were formed to collect data on their specific areas. The final recommendation was for the advising to be centered on six pathways: art/humanities, business, healthcare, STEM, social services, and exploratory. This strategy was shared with the broader college community in a variety of formats, allowing questions and concerns to be addressed. Department deans, supported by the faculty counselors, led the implementation efforts.
LESSONS LEARNED

Carrie E. Henderson, Achieving the Dream, Inc.

The PRESS for Completion grant program was successful in re-energizing the student success work at the 15 participating colleges. The grants provided the colleges with the opportunity to revisit their student success work in a deeper, more engaged fashion, which was complemented by a new level of cross-college collaboration that included both faculty and student services staff.

Table 1 shows participation in PRESS for Completion activities for full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and services staff in 2012-2013 across the 15 colleges. “Engaged in PRESS” is defined by participation in the Big Meeting and any follow up PRESS for Completion meetings. Of all those employed at the 15 colleges, 44.4 percent of full-time faculty, 7.3 percent of adjunct faculty, and 18.8 percent of student services staff participated in PRESS activities in 2012-2013. Overall, 2,616 college employees benefited from the work in year 1.

Table 1: Campus Participation in PRESS for Completion Activities by Position Type (unduplicated), 2012-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Full-Time Faculty</th>
<th>Adjunct Faculty</th>
<th>Student Services Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaged in PRESS (#)</td>
<td>Engaged in PRESS (%)</td>
<td>Engaged in PRESS (#)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Total</td>
<td>3,144</td>
<td>1,395</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Total</td>
<td>3,631</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows participation in PRESS for Completion activities for full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and services staff in 2013-2014 across the 15 colleges. Of all those employed at the 15 colleges, 53.3 percent of full-time faculty, 10.0 percent of adjunct faculty, and 19.5 percent of student services staff participated in PRESS activities in 2013-2014. Overall, 3,211 college employees benefited from the work in year 1—representing a 22.7 percent change over the previous year.

Table 2: Campus Participation in PRESS for Completion Activities by Position Type (unduplicated), 2013-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Full-Time Faculty</th>
<th>Adjunct Faculty</th>
<th>Student Services Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaged in PRESS (#)</td>
<td>Engaged in PRESS (%)</td>
<td>Engaged in PRESS (#)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Total</td>
<td>3,186</td>
<td>1,699</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Total</td>
<td>3,782</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows participation in at least two PRESS activities throughout the year for full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and services staff across the 15 colleges. “Prior to grant” is defined as the number of employees participating on each college’s ATD Core Team and Data Team (or other similar standing group dedicated to student success work) prior to when PRESS for Completion work began in summer 2012. Year 1 shows the number participating in at least two PRESS activities throughout 2012-2013 and Year 2 shows the number...
ENGAGING FACULTY AND STAFF IN THE STUDENT SUCCESS AGENDA

participating in at least two PRESS activities throughout 2013-2014.

Table 3: Campus Participation in Cross-College Groups by Position Type (duplicated), 2012-2013 - 2013-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full-Time Faculty</th>
<th>Adjunct Faculty</th>
<th>Student Services Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior to Grant</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>938</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to the grant, 176 full-time faculty were engaged in student success work across the 15 colleges. That number increased in year 1 to 742. In year 2, 938 full-time faculty participated in the work. Prior to the grant, four adjunct faculty were engaged in student success work across the 15 colleges. That number increased in year 1 to 646. In year 2, 490 adjunct faculty participated in the work. Prior to the grant, 108 student services staff were engaged in student success work across the 15 colleges. That number increased in year 1 to 385. In year 2, 382 student services staff participated in the work.

But these figures only tell part of the story—it is one thing to measure if engagement has happened and another to determine whether or not it is effective. Now, we take a closer look at some of the lessons learned through the Walmart Foundation PRESS for Completion grant, as told by participating colleges.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING FACULTY AND STAFF

- **Clarify expectations and project design up front.** Any campus discussions about beginning a new project or initiative should include faculty in its development or planning. This can be accomplished by developing a road map that outlines objectives and how they will be accomplished, and should include pertinent items such as stakeholders, team members, design principles, expected outcomes, and timeline. It is easy to lose sight of the vision when multiple voices are present in the work, so this plan should be shared, modified, and referenced regularly to remind faculty of the desired goal.

- **Make the work meaningful for faculty.** Faculty and staff want to know that what you are asking them to do will actually make a difference and, if so, for who and in what way. They are busy people, but if the work is something meaningful to them, they will be more likely to participate. Particularly for faculty, it is important to connect the work at the most important level—in the classroom. Focusing on teaching and learning is an excellent way to build—and sustain—interest from full- and part-time faculty.

- **Identify champions and get buy-in.** Start by identifying faculty members who are early adopters—those who are already invested in the work to be done and can champion the work. Support these faculty members in developing and publicizing the work to encourage more faculty members to get involved. Engaging only with faculty that are motivated to lead change does not provide the depth of reform that you have when the “fence sitters” also embrace the project. Provide resources and create opportunities for widespread engagement that let faculty and staff share issues, isolate concerns, research solutions, and develop implementation plans.

- **Ensure there is two-way communication.** Effective communication from the very onset of the project will make it easier for faculty and staff to support the initiative. Ensure that their voices are heard as equals among peers. Collaboration is holistic and does not occur when stakeholders in the population meet separately (e.g., faculty and staff, full-time and part-time). Meetings must be inclusive of all groups and allow each participant to have an equal voice.

- **Use and share data.** Data can be a powerful tool in telling the institution’s story and documenting need for improvement. Invest in institutional research capacity to not only collect data, but also to train faculty and staff to make meaning from the data. Building this culture of evidence and treating faculty and staff as valuable partners in the solution can go a long way in ensuring the initiative’s success.
• **Be conscious of workloads and scheduling.** When seeking widespread participation, give faculty and staff options and degrees to which they can be involved. If they see that there are different levels of commitment and the work is meaningful, they more likely to participate. Also ensure that faculty and staff members have opportunities to participate that fit within their work schedules, and allow them the flexibility to attend.

• **Offer incentives.** When possible, provide participating faculty and staff with something of value for engagement and participation. Incentives like stipends, travel funds, or release time can go a long way in building support and fostering participation. Offering professional development opportunities on teaching strategies will go a long way in getting faculty support. Celebrate and honor the work that they do.

For those who are interested in diving deeper into particular aspects of the faculty and staff engagement strategies, the next section provides real stories and concrete examples from four PRESS for Completion colleges.
INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDIES
Julia Lawton, Achieving the Dream, Inc.

THE CASE STUDY METHOD
As part of their PRESS work, each grantee college developed a case study – following the Harvard Business School Case Method – to be used as an educational tool to enable other colleges in the Achieving the Dream National Reform Network to learn from their efforts and successes. Each case study provides information on the engagement challenges the college identified and the work it undertook to address these challenges, using quantitative and qualitative data to highlight key points.

Case studies are focused on a main protagonist who is facing a major decision. The case provides some background information that sets the scene and then describes the challenge that has led the protagonist to this major decision. The readers are placed in the role of the protagonist and encouraged to discuss and evaluate the choices available to them. Through this exchange of ideas and perspectives, the readers build their ability to work together to solve some of the most complex challenges community colleges face.

Since they are designed to be valuable discussion tools, case studies are intended to mirror real-life situations and, as such, can be ambiguous, usually with no clear right answer. A facilitator asks guiding questions, provokes debate, and encourages critical analysis of each solution proposed to direct readers through the complexity to a decision. The skills, abilities, and courage the readers leverage and build upon through the case study process are invaluable tools for making decisions within the often overwhelmingly uncertain world of community colleges.

HOW TO USE THE PRESS CASE STUDIES
The role of the facilitator is vital to an effective discussion that hones valuable skills for real-life situations. Ideally, the facilitator is a subject matter expert in the field being discussed from outside the institution, and has been trained in case facilitation. While there is no single, correct way to facilitate a case study discussion, there are a set of useful tips you can use to guide discussions effectively. The following are best practices for facilitating a case study learning session.

• Provide the case study to participants prior to the group session to give them time to read the case and begin thinking through the challenge facing the protagonist.
• Provide some time for the group to discuss their initial thoughts about the challenge and the issues and facts related to the case at the start of the session. This section should last between 30 to 60 minutes depending on the length of the case session.
• Establish a comfortable, accepting atmosphere at the start of the session and set rules, such as “there is no wrong answer” and “no laughing at others’ ideas,” to encourage honesty and courage from the participants.
• Listen and play off the dialogue to encourage deeper analysis and steer the group (or each participant individually) towards a decision when the time is right. Prior to the group session, develop a list of investigative, open-ended questions to ask at each stage to maintain momentum in the discussions.
• Ensure the readers take and maintain ownership of the discussion by minimizing facilitator speaking...
time and holding back on providing opinions. If necessary, pose opinions or comments as questions to provoke discussion of the idea.

- Do not limit or interrupt a productive discussion unless absolutely necessary.
- Identify and communicate a set of objectives for the session at the beginning of the session.

The PRESS case studies were developed to facilitate improved problem solving and idea generation regarding how to increase faculty and staff engagement in the community colleges’ student success work.

References


Dr. Judith Sanchez and Alex Peoples are newly employed faculty members of the Alamo Colleges. Judith is a recent full-time faculty hire teaching mathematics at the largest community college in the Alamo Colleges District, while Alex is a recently hired adjunct faculty member teaching aviation technology at a college campus that focuses on career and technical education.

As the instructors begin the new school year, both enter the college classroom with questions and trepidations.

Dr. Sanchez has recently received her doctoral degree from another state and is new to the San Antonio region. She has taught as an adjunct at another community college and was a teaching assistant while she was attending the university. She is unfamiliar with the type of students she should expect in her classroom. In speaking with her chairperson, she has learned that most of her class load will be teaching developmental/college preparatory courses, and that only one of her classes will be a college-level course.

Mr. Peoples has been in the aviation industry for more than 20 years. Due to his experience in the industry, he was hired by one of the colleges to teach and help the department grow the program. Mr. Peoples has provided on-the-job training in an apprenticeship program as an industry employee. As a new adjunct faculty, Mr. Peoples is unfamiliar with the educational backgrounds of his students, but is aware that some of the students will be entering classes with basic skills deficiencies. Mr. Peoples has concerns about how he will be able to achieve high student success rates with those students in his courses. He is concerned about how that will affect his evaluation and effectiveness. He is also concerned about how to conduct a formal college course. He would like to take advantage of any available pedagogical training. His department would like to begin offering online courses soon. Mr. Peoples would like to learn about online course development, delivery, and training.

Dr. Sanchez also has questions about the faculty evaluation process. As a new faculty member, she has heard that the Alamo Colleges Board of Trustees is requesting a new faculty evaluation system. In speaking with the other tenured and tenure-track faculty members in her department, she is finding that they are only familiar with the current faculty evaluation process and have stated that they do not want to see that model change.

While Dr. Sanchez and Mr. Peoples would like to start the year off on the right foot, they are challenged with several dilemmas.

1. What are the requirements of a newly hired full-time (FT) faculty member? What are the requirements of a newly hired adjunct faculty member? What is the expectation of a new faculty member to students, the department, the college, and the district? To whom is the faculty member accountable? To what degree? Are there different requirements for adjunct and for FT faculty members?
2. Is a new FT faculty member eligible for tenure? For promotion? Is an adjunct faculty member eligible for either?
3. What kind of professional development training is available for FT faculty? For adjunct faculty?
4. Will a FT faculty member be allowed to travel to conferences? Is there training specific to the faculty member’s area of expertise?

5. As a faculty member new to the Alamo Colleges and/or new to the City of San Antonio, will there be information or training provided to faculty to learn about the city, the population, the history of the colleges, student demographics, college success rates, college priorities, and strategic plans?

6. Although a faculty member is a subject matter expert in his/her field, what types of pedagogical training will be provided to assist the faculty member’s success rate in the classroom? Will there be different training for college-level courses, developmental courses, or career and technical courses? Also, what kind of technological tools are available? Will training be available for both FT and adjuncts?

7. As a faculty member is provided professional development, will there be any assessment metrics implemented to determine if the faculty member was able to successfully incorporate the professional development into the classroom? If professional development was not successfully incorporated into the classroom, will this be noted in the faculty member’s evaluation?

BACKGROUND AND CONVERGING STRATEGIES

A faculty development program for the Alamo Colleges had been under discussion for several years, starting in 2009 with the creation of the first developmental education improvement plan. All faculty development opportunities were provided by the colleges with no coordination or cross-college sessions led by the district leadership.

At several student success committee meetings, the district’s trustees asked for an update on faculty development. The trustees also questioned the efficacy of tenure and sought to understand how tenure was aligned with evaluation. The board of trustees included a fund in the budget two years in a row for student success activities, with the strong suggestion that the fund be applied to a robust faculty development program.

In planning several academic and student support initiatives through Achieving the Dream, the vice chancellor for academic success, the colleges’ leaders, and targeted faculty included a faculty development component. Also, in response to the board’s charge to have a solid faculty evaluation process that identifies areas for improvement aligned with a development program, a cross-college team, led by a faculty member and one of the college presidents, began the process of developing a new faculty job description and an evaluation program that would align with an expanded faculty role. It seemed to be clear to the team that professional development for faculty and staff was an important part of improving student success. The new faculty job description was approved in February 2012, and the resulting new evaluation process was piloted in 2013-2014. The academic vice presidents, after gathering feedback from their faculty, put together a list of competencies to use as a starting point for a faculty development program. (Appendix A-A)

Each college had handled professional development differently across the years. Most held a faculty meeting at the beginning of the fall semester that included both full-time and adjunct faculty. Some held a separate session for adjunct faculty one evening prior to the beginning of the fall term to share any changes from the previous academic year. Additionally, each college offered other faculty development opportunities—some around a specific focus, such as collaborative learning, and some to provide an opportunity for individual faculty to share best practices. During the same time period, some of the colleges began to offer workshops once a semester for adjuncts in mathematics and English to provide support in the developmental education courses. Adjunct faculty development was generally limited to a few opportunities and was occasionally supported through stipends for participation in Saturday or evening activities.

The Alamo Colleges’ chancellor suggested to the district leadership group in spring 2013 that the people
responsible at each college for faculty development should come together to develop a comprehensive, consistent faculty development program for the Alamo Colleges using the activities across the colleges as a starting point. The suggestion included the need to create an expectation for professional development requirements for adjunct faculty. This proposal spread across the colleges. “We have a good faculty development program at our college,” stated each vice president. “We have a meeting with adjunct faculty during fall convocation week.” At the weekly president/vice chancellor (PVC) meeting, all the presidents expressed reasons it would not work every time the topic was on the agenda. Another college president later shared with the chancellor, “it will be ok for the district to develop an adjunct faculty development program, but we are taking care of full time faculty.” Discussion with PVC went on for several months and seemed to be a way to delay any movement forward on a development program. How could we figure out what to do to get back on track to develop a much-needed professional development program that supported student success?

AN OVERVIEW OF PAST EVENTS

Alamo Colleges serve Bexar County, population 1.8 million, in south Texas and seven surrounding counties with many small, rural communities. It is a diverse area with 51 percent Hispanic and 8 percent African-American citizens. The colleges’ overall enrollment mirrors its service area. The college district includes five individually accredited institutions. San Antonio College, the largest with about 23,000 students, sits just north of downtown and started in 1925. St. Philip’s College, a Historically Black College and University and Hispanic Serving Institution, was founded in 1898. The two institutions came together as a district in 1942. Palo Alto College was started on the south side of the county in 1983. Northwest Vista College was founded in 1995 in the fastest growing area of the county with a focus on cooperative and collaborative learning and innovative initiatives. Ten intertwined communities on the northeast side of the county with a heavy military and retired military constituency supported the development of Northeast Lakeview College in 2007, which is seeking candidacy status for accreditation. Each college has its own culture and traditions, all are Hispanic Serving Institutions, and each is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

The five colleges enroll more than 62,000 students each long term across an eight-county service area. Approximately 80 percent of first-time-in-college entering students require at least one level of developmental mathematics and 50 percent require some work in developmental reading and/or writing. Students who apply to one or more of the colleges are admitted to all five and have a single Alamo Colleges transcript that documents the courses taken at the individual colleges. The colleges have a single core curriculum, a course inventory with many of the same courses offered at multiple colleges, and many consistent programs available at more than one college. A student must take at least 25 percent of the courses required for a degree at the college granting the certificate or degree. Approximately 10,000 students attend more than one of the colleges at the same time, and about 9,000 students are enrolled in dual credit. The Alamo Colleges are currently expanding online course and program offerings with the intent to develop an Alamo Colleges Online virtual campus that offers the colleges’ individual online offerings with a common academic and student support foundation.

The four accredited institutions joined the first cohort of Achieving the Dream in 2004 as a single participant in the first group of 27. Each of the colleges was qualified to apply for participation, but the chancellor at the time insisted the Alamo Colleges join as a single entity. Up until that time, the system support was solely around operations—human resources, finances, facilities, and technology. The district had two vice chancellors: one for finance and one who served as liaison for workforce and economic development between external partnerships and the colleges’ workforce programs. The first few years in Achieving the Dream were challenging. Sharing strategies, initiatives, and results were the biggest hurdles and took most of the energy and time.

On the academic side, the Achieving the Dream director led the core cross-college team and met with leadership
ENGAGING FACULTY AND STAFF IN THE STUDENT SUCCESS AGENDA

for each developmental discipline and the colleges’ discipline leads for the gateway courses, which included mathematics, English, reading, history, and biology. Each group was asked to review results and identify strategies to increase success. These ad hoc, cross-college efforts had minimum support on the individual college campuses. In fact, initial face-to-face faculty discussions within disciplines were often confrontational. The colleges had not collaborated on student initiatives, and the faculty in each discipline had not met with their colleagues across the colleges. It took several years of dialogue for the discipline faculty teams to work together.

As the colleges shared results and attempted to work together, the board of trustees charged the current chancellor, who was hired in 2006, to better serve the region’s needs by leveraging the programs and services of the five colleges and bringing consistency across the colleges to increase access and student success. At the time, the director of Achieving the Dream was working with the colleges’ leadership through a committee structure to review admissions and academic processes across the colleges in preparation for transition to a new system management approach. Up until that point, each college had separate processes and its own student data base. Each process development review began with documenting how each college individually addressed the activity, and then the group worked together to develop a single process to be used across all colleges. Newly hired vice chancellors for academic success and for student success led collaboration and cooperation across the colleges in preparation for a transition to a single student information system database.

In response to a board charge, the chancellor developed the developmental education (DE) improvement plan in summer 2009 to increase DE success. A foundational component of this charge included a faculty and staff development plan. In 2010, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) provided funding for a Developmental Education Demonstration Project grant opportunity with a goal to fund several large community colleges to create initiatives to improve DE success across the state. Although the college presidents were not particularly eager to add this opportunity to the pressures on the colleges and their faculty, the recently-hired vice chancellor for academic success worked with the Student Academic Success Council (comprised of the five academic, the five student success vice presidents, and the chairs/leads for the three DE disciplines) to submit a proposal built around the DE improvement plan. Everyone was happy with the $1.2 million received to implement these DE initiatives. One of the strategies identified was to develop a comprehensive faculty and staff development plan for all personnel who worked with DE students. As part of a continuing focus on increasing success in DE courses, the Achieving the Dream director worked with the colleges’ discipline leads to develop faculty development sessions for all mathematics, reading, and writing faculty to address specific changes in the developmental education curriculum. This was an initiative that provided professional development across the colleges and included full- and part-time faculty for the first time.

In 2010, some faculty termination issues for cause resulted in hearings with the board of trustees. The termination actions included tenured and non-tenured faculty. The board questioned why the resolutions would be different for different faculty if the facts were the same. That led to further questions about the efficacy of tenure and whether it should continue just because it had always been in place. The board asked about the faculty evaluation and tenure processes and questioned if these processes supported the faculty role required in today’s community college environment. The board asked the chancellor to review and enhance the faculty evaluation program and bring it forward with any additional relevant information to guide a discussion about tenure policies. The board of trustees had adopted a revision of the policies and procedures in 2009, and the revisions included the omission of tenure. Any discussion of reinstatement of tenure would require an updated evaluation program aligned with a strong faculty development model.

Discussions across the Achieving the Dream in resulted in an increased awareness that faculty engagement with students, faculty advising/mentoring, faculty interaction with adjuncts, and other factors are integral to student
success. For several years, the colleges’ academic leaders had been discussing the need to update the faculty job description created in 1992 (Appendix A-B) and the evaluation instrument created in 1991 (Appendix A-C) since best practices had changed significantly. Faculty members across the colleges involved in the student success strategies also expressed the need to update the job description to document their changing roles. As a cost-saving strategy in 2011, the leadership across the colleges made a strategic decision to have a 50 percent - 50 percent teaching ratio of full- to part-time faculty. The ratio target led to faculty and administrator discussions about the increased need for adjunct faculty development.

The chancellor created a cross-college team, co-chaired by a faculty member and a college president, to develop a new evaluation program to address the changing faculty role and the board’s concerns. The group, with the chancellor’s approval, decided to start by developing a new job description. The process included broad review by faculty across the colleges. The board of trustees approved the new full-time teaching faculty job description in February 2012. (Appendix A-D) Job descriptions for adjunct faculty, faculty librarians, and faculty counselors were then developed using the teaching faculty description as a model.

The faculty co-chair for the evaluation team found Dr. Raoul Arreola during research on faculty evaluation best practices and after reading his book, Developing a Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation System: A Handbook for College Faculty and Administrators on Designing and Operating a Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation System, and suggested he be brought in as a consultant for developing the evaluation model aligned with the job description. Dr. Arreola worked with the committee and, as with the job description development process, the evaluation content was shared across the faculty, and feedback was used to develop the instrument and process.

One of the defining concepts of Dr. Arreola’s work is that faculty earn degrees in their discipline and enter a college as a faculty member without any training in the meta-profession of “teaching.” He describes three areas in which faculty are expected to perform and be evaluated: instructional design, instructional delivery, and instructional assessment. Yet most colleges do not provide any professional enrichment around these areas, which are vital to student success. The evaluation model was developed around these areas most important to a community college faculty member’s role—teaching. (Appendix A-E) A pilot was conducted with 50 faculty (10 from each college) in 2013-2014. Feedback is being gathered about the content, process, and technology, and the process will be revised by late September 2014. A second pilot of 100 faculty will follow the updated process in 2014-2015 with a target to implement the faculty evaluation model with all faculty in fall 2015.

Throughout the development of the evaluation model and the pilot period, faculty members have associated the development of the job description, evaluation, and any discussion of a faculty development program with the question about continuance of awarding tenure in the Alamo Colleges. The faculty in the pilot began to question the content of the evaluation model and the job description as they realized the extent of the changes in their roles. Perhaps the changes made to recognize and support the faculty role in student success were skewed by the tenure issue.

When the Alamo Colleges joined the PRESS grant initiative, the focus of the plan was to create online professional development modules for adjunct faculty. It was part of a larger strategy to develop an adjunct certification that would require adjuncts to participate in professional development in a feasible, flexible model. The Achieving the Dream director held a focus group with adjunct faculty who were eager to propose professional development topics of interest and need. It was understood that the modules would also be part of the professional development plan for all faculty in the Alamo Colleges. The plan for developing adjunct faculty modules included creating a cross-college faculty team that would take the job description, the evaluation model, competencies developed through the vice presidents’ work, and feedback gathered from existing adjunct
faculty activities to identify the most needed content for the modules. One adjunct faculty member remarked, “I would like to know a little bit of history about the college and about the types of students I will have enrolled in my class. I am also curious as to their levels of college readiness.” As a result, one of the topics suggested in the focus group is the need to acclimate a newly hired adjunct faculty member to the Alamo Colleges and its students. A suggested module would include the background and culture of each of the five colleges within the Alamo Colleges, a description of some of the unique programs offered at each location, and an overview of the demographics and needs of the students from each college. Further conversations with full time faculty indicated this is an important topic for all faculty but particularly for adjunct faculty since they are not as familiar with the student composition—many are high school teachers but there are also many who are in the business community or teach at four-year institutions.

Having some funding for the adjunct faculty development modules would create momentum to move the professional development plan along at the same time the faculty evaluation model was being finalized for the pilot. Creating the cross-college team would also contribute to the chancellor’s proposal to bring together faculty development across the colleges. The chancellor indicated the colleges could choose to keep the current personnel and move them into other needed roles within the college or allow them to be part of a cross-college team that would develop the comprehensive, consistent faculty development plan.

All the pressures and demands described above converged to stop movement.

NEXT STEPS
The district now is moving forward to create a faculty development team under human resources. The chancellor and the human resources associate vice chancellor met with each of the college’s presidents to discuss how to move forward in identifying personnel, if any, who would be moving to the district. The person overseeing faculty development at San Antonio College will be transferred to the district under human resources. Human resources has hired three personnel to work with developing and offering adjunct faculty development, and a faculty member from one of the colleges to coordinate activities for full-time faculty. Sessions have been held at each of the colleges with faculty to gather information on areas for professional development activities. Human resources will be hosting new adjunct faculty development in January 2015. While no details have been provided, the personnel will be developing a plan during the spring 2015 term.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. The leadership of the district and colleges determined that the faculty job description, evaluation model, and faculty development should be aligned. The faculty seemed to agree. Did the colleges create a strategy that made the connection for the colleges’ constituents? Were some constituents who should have been involved overlooked?
2. How could the Alamo Colleges leadership have ensured that the colleges’ leadership shared the concept and plan with the faculty?
3. The faculty involved in the evaluation planning team and faculty feedback during the evaluation process seemed to buy in to the meta-profession concept. What could have been done to help the faculty-at-large really understand and support the importance of the meta-profession?
4. How could the full-time faculty have been better engaged to understand the changing needs for faculty development?
5. How could the colleges have been better engaged in leading the faculty development actions?
6. How could the district and colleges have better addressed the various needs and defused the converging forces that halted the faculty development plan development?
7. What can be learned from this case study that will assist your college in expanding faculty development activities that address teaching?
APPENDIX A (SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS)
A. List of Competencies
B. 1992 Job Description
C. 1991 Faculty Evaluation by Chairs
D. New Full-time teaching job description
E. New Evaluation Instrument
How do they expect me to sustain this level of engagement?

Nathalie Nguyen, the coordinator of professional development for faculty and the chair of the first-year experience courses at Durham Technical Community College, was frustrated by the immediate road ahead for sustaining engagement of the college’s faculty. She had just been stopped by a coworker who had let her know that the president was going to make an announcement about increasing faculty load.

The first lines of Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities ran through her head. It was, in some way, the “best of times” in that faculty and staff engagement was at an all-time high, partly due to Nathalie's hard work for the past several years. Nathalie was currently a project coordinator for a college engagement initiative called “PRESS” focused on bringing faculty and staff together in small teams to improve course completion rates. The program she designed and implemented was contributing to faculty development, improving active teaching pedagogy, and increasing opportunities for student success. Employees were praising this new effort. She felt that she was making a difference—and that was important for her and the college.

“They’re going to add more to faculty loads? The timing could not be worse.”

It was also quickly becoming the worst of times. Nathalie had just learned of two factors that could weigh heavily on her efforts to sustain engagement in the middle of the implementation phase of her current program. Due to long-term college budget issues and the indirect impact of new state and federal legislative changes, the teaching load for all of faculty would be increased to the maximum for the next term. In addition to this new load assignment, the instructors and staff were already overwhelmed by huge advisee loads, increased requests for committee involvement, and other administrative tasks. She was concerned that faculty would bail from participation in the program.

It was time to plan for the next steps, yet Nathalie felt gridlocked. To add to her stress, the president of the college had just invited her to meet with him to give a mid-point update on the status of her new program.

NATHALIE’S CONNECTION TO THE COLLEGE

Nathalie had been working at Durham Technical Community College for 13 years, first solely as an instructor in developmental education, but later her work expanded to include responsibility for coordinating the Teaching-Learning Center, the college’s professional development center for faculty. In her role as a coordinator, she designed, scheduled, and promoted all professional development offerings associated with teaching and learning. In her role as an instructor, she worked mostly with new first-generation, low-income, or first-time-in-college students.
ENGAGING FACULTY AND STAFF IN THE STUDENT SUCCESS AGENDA

Nathalie worked on the main campus of Durham Technical Community College in Durham, North Carolina. In 1961, Durham Tech was established as a technical institute that served one hundred students in automotive and nursing programs. By 2001, when Nathalie began working at the college, Durham Tech had grown into a comprehensive community college serving 24,000 students annually. The college currently served around 5,500 curriculum students each term with a mix of university transfer and career technical programs. An even greater number of students were enrolled in continuing and adult education offerings. As such, the college felt both big and small to her, with all the positives and challenges that might accompany working in a mid-sized college.

Nathalie loved that she had the opportunity to teach quite a diverse student population. In 2013, the average age of the college’s student population was 30. The majority of students came from the local county service area and ethnically represented the diverse backgrounds (45 percent black; 35 percent white; 8 percent Hispanic; 6 percent other/multiple; 5 percent Asian/Pacific Islander) that mirrored the county’s demographics. In Nathalie’s interactions with students, it was clear that some often balanced their lives on razor-thin margins, some managed family responsibilities, and many worked full- or part-time jobs (some 63 percent). Some 58 percent of the students received need-based financial aid that year. After teaching developmental education for several years, Nathalie started teaching the college success course, and felt it was a great match for her passion for teaching.

Nathalie was one of more than 300 full-time employees. She worked with more than 500 part-time or adjunct employees at the college. Although it might be easy to get lost in the crowd given the number of employees at the college, Nathalie was a notable employee working in developmental education, a department on campus that was known for innovation and deep concern for student needs. Over the few years she had worked at the college, she had developed a solid reputation as a trusted faculty member. Her supervisor, co-workers, and the college administration supported and respected her work. Feeling validated and connected, she was engaged in meaningful work that sustained her and helped to improve the experience of students and employees at the college.

PART-TIME FACULTY ON THE SIDELINES

Clearly, all employees at the college were not feeling as engaged or valued as Nathalie. She had noticed this dynamic when she started working at the college. In her first year of teaching at Durham Tech, she remembered asking another faculty member, who was teaching part-time, if he planned to go to the faculty-staff meeting that afternoon. He told her point-blank that he’d never been invited. Puzzled, she thought it must have been an oversight. However, she decided to ask someone higher up. She recalled one early and troubling conversation she had with one of the college’s administrators.

“I noticed that none of the adjunct faculty are attending our convocations and faculty-staff meetings. Are they invited to attend?” Nathalie thought this might be a rather simple question, but apparently, it wasn’t. She got a quick reaction from the dean.

“Well – it’s not like we told them they can’t come. They can come. I just worry that we won’t have enough space. You know that our auditorium will only hold 200 people, and we’ve got 800 employees. Where would they all fit?” Dean Collins continued, almost defensively. “Besides – we can’t afford to pay them a stipend to be here. They don’t get paid for any hours other than to show up and teach. Wouldn’t it be insulting if we invited all of our part-time instructors and did not offer a stipend? That would be worse!” He ended the conversation by stating “I think it’s best just not to mention the meetings. We don’t want to upset our faculty.”

This wasn’t what she had expected. Although Nathalie understood the realities of the space constraints, she couldn’t help but wonder if Durham Tech had inadvertently developed a culture of neglect for not including a
valuable and most numerous resource—part-time faculty.

In her first years, Nathalie worked with the college’s foundation to counteract this dynamic by setting up a small stipend structure. Due to her work, part-time faculty now received some financial support for on-campus professional development. An adjunct teaching institute was established through partnership with the college’s foundation to pay adjunct faculty a $50 stipend to attend two or more professional development offerings each semester. Although she was proud of this progress, she knew it wasn’t nearly enough. She decided to focus her time for the next few years studying and, hopefully, changing this dynamic.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE FACULTY AND STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Nathalie’s determination paid off. Early in her employment at the college, she implemented one of the most successful efforts to engage faculty and staff from across the college. Nathalie designed and coordinated Durham Tech’s College Success Course Instructor Training, which was required of all college success course instructors and optional for any college employee who wanted the training experience. The training provided participants with innovative teaching techniques, strategies to improve students’ first college year experience, and content knowledge that would improve their advising practices.

Since 2006, Nathalie had trained more than 150 college faculty and staff to teach College Transfer Success, the college’s first-year experience course. Of this total number of training participants, 95 were faculty, 45 were staff, and 10 were administrators (including the college president). The four-day, 12-hour training was purposefully designed to mirror as closely as possible the 16 hours of instruction that students receive in the course. Participants moved through a sequence of activities that helped them reflect on the needs and strengths of first-year students, identify the resources and strategies that this population of students needed, and prepare to teach the course content to a diverse group of students. The training was a huge success, and the college administration was quite pleased that the training was positively influencing the culture toward an orientation of early intervention and student success.

POCKETS OF FACULTY AND STAFF ENGAGEMENT

As part of the college’s commitment to Achieving the Dream, Nathalie had also noticed the impact of several related initiatives on faculty and staff engagement. There were three specific interventions the college had designed and implemented in the past six years that were successfully engaging full-time and adjunct faculty in student success work. First, the college now provided specific four-hour contracts to all adjunct faculty to attend the college’s new faculty orientation, which introduced all faculty to critical interventions and support structures for at-risk students.

The second intervention involved adjunct faculty who taught developmental education courses. The college’s new early alert program encouraged all developmental faculty (both full-time and part-time) to call for “back up” when a student was demonstrating at-risk behaviors for dropping out or failing the course. When the college brought early alert to full-scale implementation in all developmental education courses, Nathalie noticed that this helped: full-time and adjunct faculty from that department feel supported; student services staff feel connected to what was happening in the classroom; and both groups of employees feel that they were an important part of the college’s work on persistence and success.

During the previous year, developmental education faculty members had also been engaged in research and in professional development to determine the best model for the redesign of developmental mathematics. Nathalie observed that the mathematics faculty had traveled extensively to conferences and other colleges; they had piloted new approaches and analyzed data; and they had settled on a new emporium model as part of the
statewide redesign of mathematics. The process had been a collaborative one among faculty at the college, with their colleagues at other state community colleges, and with colleagues and experts from across the country. Instructors who had taught the pilot classes were now training other faculty and adjuncts. During the pilot, adjunct faculty and professional tutors were hired to work as teaching assistants along with the full-time faculty. Nathalie observed that this model seemed to be especially helpful for professional development of the college’s adjuncts, and helped build relationships among faculty and staff.

**FACULTY INTEREST GROUPS - FIGS**

Three years into Nathalie’s work, she decided to implement a new idea. Although there were now stronger communities of inquiry among student services staff, developmental education faculty, and first-year experience instructors, the college really needed to engage additional faculty who were not involved in these initiatives in a more meaningful way. The college had focused on broad strategies that brought about systemic change to orientation, advising, and first-year experiences. However, there were no complementary strategies to engage faculty at the individual classroom level.

Nathalie successfully advocated to use some Achieving the Dream funds that year to create and provide incentives for some Faculty Interest Groups (FIGs—a model of practitioner research that facilitated faculty and staff research in a way that led to enhanced teaching and learning). Nathalie’s pilot FIG strategy was quite successful in engaging a small number of faculty in the individual process of encouraging student success. Two faculty research groups identified an instructional problem that interested them, and then worked together to systematically test strategies to overcome that problem. By 2010, the faculty even published the work of their groups with a volume of Learning Matters, the academic journal published by the college’s Teaching-Learning Center.

However, the pilot had only deeply engaged less than ten additional faculty, and Nathalie knew that in order to bring about systemic change, this effort alone wasn’t sufficient. Scale was important, and she had to figure out a way to reach more people.

**CORE TEAM LEADER INTERVIEW**

Nathalie next decided that it might be good to interview the college’s Achieving the Dream Core Team Leader, Ed Phillips. She thought he might provide some context or at least a different perspective on the efforts that had been attempted to date. Here’s an excerpt of her recording from that meeting.

**Nathalie:** What do you consider to be the college's strengths with regard to faculty and staff engagement?

**Ed:** Durham Tech has had a lot of success with various strategies for constructive faculty engagement in our work over the past eight years. We can provide evidence of strategies to demonstrate that more than 200 of our faculty and staff, including adjunct faculty and part-time staff, have been directly connected to our work on student success. I was recently reading a great article from Public Agenda that listed several principles and promising practices on engagement… I think the name of the article is Engaging Adjunct and Full-Time Faculty in Student Success Innovation… Regardless, I think we’re on the right track. Our faculty and staff have taught student success courses—as you know!—participated in courageous conversations around issues of racial and income equity, redesigned developmental education curriculum, implemented full-scale orientations, engaged in specific classroom pedagogy research, and more. We’ve got a lot going on.

**Nathalie:** I’ve heard you use that term “courageous conversation” quite a bit in the past, but never really knew the origin of the phrase. Even though I’ve helped plan these activities and I have a sense of what you mean by it, I’d be interested to hear what you mean by the word “courageous.”
Ed: Early in our Achieving the Dream work we found it imperative to engage all faculty and staff in structured and safe discussions around topics that were very difficult to discuss. We couldn’t effectively begin to address the gap in persistence of our African-American students if we were not willing to talk about race and ethnicity. We couldn’t begin to tackle financial concerns for low-income students unless we were willing to talk about poverty. We couldn’t fully address the barriers to student success unless we were willing to talk about how our existing policies and procedures negatively impacted our students. To be honest, I was also a bit nervous about having these conversations. But, we knew we couldn’t just keep doing business as usual. To address these important issues, our Achieving the Dream coach told us that we needed to begin having “courageous conversations.” And that’s what we tried to do. As you have experienced, all of these meetings have had a similar structure that we have found works well. The meeting is called by our president to demonstrate commitment at a high level, but it’s planned by our success team to engage leadership at various levels. All faculty and staff are invited to attend to facilitate broad engagement. We then review together the data surrounding the topic to illustrate the principle of data-informed decision-making, and we engage in courageous, difficult, or sometimes painful discussions in large and small groups to develop new strategies. Average attendance at our convocations has been 120 people at each, and those who attend indicate these conversations are important.

Nathalie: I get it. Thanks. So, let me ask the opposite question. What do you consider to be the college’s weaknesses—or areas of improvement—for broad faculty and staff engagement?

Ed: Well… Despite all of these methods, our faculty… both full-time and adjunct… who teach upper-level or specific program-level courses have not yet really been invited to engage in the important work of reform. They do participate, but I’m not sure the college has done much to facilitate or structure experiences to invite them to be a part. I think if we are going to achieve this next level of engagement, we need to focus on something like course completion to ensure that all aspects of student success have been addressed. The courses we might choose for this initiative are important. Since the college has some evidence of engagement for developmental, gateway, and college success courses, our work must focus now on those courses that are more mid-level and inadvertently serve as gateways to student completion due to high failure, high drop-out, or low success rates.

NEW ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY

Within months of her meeting with Ed, Nathalie got the opportunity she needed to bring engagement to greater scale. Ed contacted Nathalie to let her know that a potential grant was on the horizon that might just fit with what she wanted to do. So, she jumped in. Nathalie was instrumental in obtaining a Walmart Foundation PRESS (Persistence, Retention, and Student Success) for Completion grant from Achieving the Dream. According to the request for proposal, the grant was designed to tackle two of the toughest, most common community college reform challenges: engaging full-time and adjunct faculty in student success efforts and eliminating the disconnections between academic departments and student services that limit vital collaboration. She knew that this grant was a perfect fit for the problems the college faced.

Nathalie and Ed designed, secured funding for, and set out to implement innovative engagement work to include a structured set of experiences over 18 months. They took a comprehensive approach to faculty and staff engagement; one that used multiple, layered strategies concurrently. Nathalie re-introduced several previous strategies into the experience, including faculty interest groups but tried out a few new social media strategies as well. The comprehensive experience included large campus-wide convocations; dynamic faculty Thinking Teams to investigate the student success data for 11 high-risk courses (courses in which student completion is particularly low and failure rates are particularly high, courses with high attendance, and gateway courses that prepare them for higher level coursework); workshops for all faculty and staff; and peer social media ambassadors to engage students.
A GOOD START
The first challenge for Nathalie was a successful kickoff event. Although the normal Big Meetings in past years had normally attracted around 100 faculty and staff, when Nathalie and the planning team took time to invite everyone, more than 240 people registered for the event. The challenge involved finding adequate meeting space. The college’s largest venue for convocations was an auditorium that seated 200 people. Since Nathalie didn’t want everyone to sit in an auditorium for three hours (she thought... must engage participants—not allow people to sit and just receive information!), she had to change plans at the last minute and break the convocation into two parts. The first part was a presentation. Everyone attended with standing room only in the auditorium for one hour. Then, the second part was broken into two different breakouts sessions with equal content, one that occurred prior to lunch and one after. The same data activities and PRESS information were given to both breakout sessions. With this revised structure, Nathalie was able to schedule space that allowed for active participation in the event before and after lunch.

The excitement generated at the Big Meeting was palpable. Natalie received emails from full-time faculty who indicated that they felt the event was one of the most important events hosted in years. She had part-time faculty exclaim that they had never felt “so integrated” into the important work of the college as they did after attending the convocation. Within two weeks after the event, Nathalie had more faculty and staff sign up for the faculty interest groups, otherwise known as Thinking Teams, than she could accommodate with the original stipend structure. She had 63 people apply for 48 positions (with stipends). So, again, with Ed’s help, she modified the structure to make sure that the college encouraged and engaged everyone that was interested. Using the criteria that it was most important to engage people in this work who had not previously been engaged in earlier student success work, she prioritized and carefully selected Thinking Team members that were new to the work. She also encouraged those not selected to serve on Thinking Teams as “ex-officio” members. This strategy worked well. As a result, actual attendance at each Thinking Team meeting during the first term ranged from 60-74 participants even though attendance was only required of the 48 members receiving stipends. The increased participation further helped to ensure cross-department engagement. The grant’s technical assistant attended the first meeting and witnessed the excitement and engagement evident in the numbers of people who attended as well as the energy present surrounding the activities associated with this new initiative.

MID-TERMS
One year into the program, Ed wrote a report summarizing the work that had been accomplished in the first terms. It was quite promising and optimistic. Here’s an excerpt from Ed’s writing in the “lessons learned” section.

- **The college leveraged “big” meetings to double the attendance and deepen adjunct connections.** With creative thought given to how to use limited spaces and leverage stipends or other incentives, Durham Tech almost doubled the attendance at our convocations as well as brought a new focus on teaching and learning. This has been quite exciting!

- **The college learned to find balance between prescriptive and structured engagement.** It appears to us that it is very important to develop structures for engagement that provide ongoing face-to-face interaction, help encourage cross-department communication, and invite faculty and staff to use data to design effective interventions. However, it is equally important not to dictate or be overly prescriptive when designing engagement opportunities. There is an “art” to the balance that must be achieved. We feel that we found a balance between autonomy (for investment) and structure (to avoid silos or group think) in the structure we proposed and implemented.

- **The college integrated on-going, integrated faculty and staff-led interest groups to engage our faculty at the most important level—in the classroom.** Durham Tech experienced successful
broad-scale engagement of our faculty by focusing our attention and providing support to study best approaches to teaching and learning.

- **The college provided structured time and support to reflect and learn.** Durham Tech experienced success using a combination of a stipend structure with a structured meeting schedule that allowed our faculty interest groups to get away, reflect on classroom experiences, and engage in an on-going continuous improvement process.

- **The college encouraged dialog using social media with faculty and staff (not just students).** Durham Tech used some new avenues to engage faculty and staff including the use of Twitter and Poll Everywhere questions in meetings as well as structured Facebook interactions with students in the courses under study.

- **The college blurred the lines between faculty and staff.** We provided structured settings where full-time and part-time faculty and staff were at the table as equal partners in course completion and redesign efforts. This appears to help everyone feel valued.

- **The college emphasized good teaching and learning practices.** We avoided “lecture” meetings. We provided time for our faculty and staff to stop, ask, and reflect. We set a goal to build engagement into every interaction.

Clearly, both Nathalie and Ed felt that they were onto something important. Once these engagement strategies had been implemented, Nathalie had witnessed the energy of faculty and staff begin to soar.

**STUDENT SUCCESS DATA**

Nathalie felt that the college was on the right track, but she also knew that depending on impressions or anecdotal evidence wouldn’t cut it. She needed some additional measures to demonstrate how the new initiatives were making a difference. Since each faculty interest group was studying a different course, she was optimistic that the teams would have preliminary data to indicate gains in course completion rates.

When asked by the college administration to produce a sample of one of the courses under review, Nathalie used the data from the introduction to college algebra course. First, she presented the aggregate baseline data from the academic years of 2009 to 2012, showing the grade distributions prior to intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, she provided the grade distributions of students from the spring semester of 2013, the first term following an intervention.
Finally, she provided the grade distributions from the fall semester of 2013, the second term after the team had introduced an intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the faculty and staff Thinking Team had worked hard to design and implement strategies to improve student success in the course, the direct data on course completion rates were not what she or others had hoped. When the data were reviewed after two terms of proposed interventions, there was no clear evidence of significant or meaningful gains for the majority of classes under review. There were sporadic indications of success in reducing withdrawal and failure rates, but not enough to indicate a trend.

**ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT DATA**

Nathalie also learned there was a good chance to insert a question about engagement in an upcoming survey, so she seized the opportunity. In the spring semester of 2013, the college asked all faculty and staff to participate in a survey designed to determine if the college was making progress toward implementation of and engagement with the college’s guiding principles. One-hundred and seventy seven full-time and part-time employees responded with good representation of all divisions and departments of the college, as well as a solid distribution of responses from those who identified specifically as full-time and part-time faculty and staff.

To assess progress toward moving the college a culture of student success, the college asked faculty to either agree or disagree with the statement “The college creates a culture where all institutional actions are focused on improving student learning and success and leading to student goal completion.” The results for this indicator were mixed with positive trends. A majority of the faculty and staff indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that this statement was true. Nathalie obtained a graph with the distribution of answers; it was clear from the sizable group of those who disagreed that the college still had work to do.
The question that Nathalie introduced about engagement painted a different picture. The data on the levels of engagement among college faculty and staff were much more affirming. To assess progress toward the college’s intent to engage all faculty and staff in creating a culture of student success, Nathalie requested that the researchers ask employees to indicate their level of involvement (engagement) with the same statement (The college creates a culture where all institutional actions are focused on improving student learning and success and leading to student goal completion). Of all respondents, 88 percent indicated that they were somewhat or very engaged. Those who identified as “faculty” indicated the highest level of engagement with 68 percent indicating they felt “very engaged” in this work. The researchers also provided Nathalie with a graph that provided the distribution of answers.

These data were what Natalie had hoped for. Although she knew that there was still much work to do to establish and maintain a culture of student success and goal completion, she was quite encouraged that the college’s levels of engagement were high, especially when the data represented all segments of various categories of faculty and staff and all areas of the college.
LONG-TERM BUDGET SHORTFALL
That’s when it felt as if things began to fall apart. For Nathalie and for the college, it was the best and the worst of times. The college had begun taking additional and more drastic steps to counteract budget shortfalls. Over the past 20 years at the college, budget shortfalls had occurred over relatively short periods of time, generally in two or three-year cycles. In this historical cycle, faculty could expect that times would be difficult, but eventually the budget situation would improve, raises might be reinstated, and the culture could shift back to a more optimistic pattern. This time was different. The college now faced a fifth year of sustained funding challenges. Further cuts to the college’s base funding had been proposed by a new political environment in the state. Nathalie’s dean and department head was communicating that the outlook for the following year was equally negative. With no end in sight, the college had been forced to consider very difficult choices including raising faculty load and losing staff positions through attrition, which resulted in heavier workloads for both faculty and staff.

Given that North Carolina is a “Right to Work” state, and each community college is fairly autonomous with separate boards of trustees, decisions such as these would be made locally at each college. As a result, the college leadership was wrestling with how they might maintain a culture of continuous improvement, engagement, and optimism for student success while reversing a long-term erosion of base funding. Everyone was feeling the strain, especially Nathalie. It was clear to her that the college’s financial outlook had negatively impacted faculty morale, and she was responsible for recommending a path forward.

TIME FOR A DECISION
Nathalie will meet with the president in two days. She must decide if she should continue the current initiative without modifications, make modifications to adjust for the higher teaching load, or place the initiative completely on hold for a term. She feels it is critical to continue the work of faculty and staff engagement, but she doubts if she and her faculty might handle the load and the program demands simultaneously. She also anticipates that the president might want to hear her rationale to secure additional funding after the program ends. Nathalie is also quite concerned that the data around course completion rates do not show consistent gains.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. What promising engagement practices are evident?
2. What strengths and weakness are evident with regard to engagement?
3. How might the college sustain faculty engagement in the midst of load increases?
4. Will faculty resent Nathalie if she continues this program as they prepare for increased teaching loads?
5. What data would support a continuation of this initiative?
6. If you were the president, what would convince you that this program deserves sustained funding?
7. What more might the college do to impact student success?
8. What more might the college do to engage faculty and staff broadly and meaningfully?
9. How similar or dissimilar is this college to your own?
10. Do you identify with Nathalie’s challenges? Why or why not?

SO, WHAT HAPPENED?
Nathalie decided that continuing the engagement initiative as it was originally designed was the best course of action despite the budget, the load challenges, and the lukewarm student success data. She successfully defended a proposal with the college’s president in light of the data challenges, and secured his support to continue the program for two additional years.
The revolt against Nathalie for suggesting continuation of high levels of engagement in the midst of the difficult term never materialized. In fact, despite the higher loads during the following term and much discussion about inequity of load or other teaching concerns, no faculty dropped out of the faculty interest groups. When faculty were asked why there was no attrition, a clear theme emerged. Faculty recognized the importance of the work, and felt that this well-designed experience provided time to stop and consider important questions of persistence, completion, and success. Student success is a high value of the faculty, and they expressed to Nathalie that they would feel a sense of loss should they not be given time to spend together on these questions. In the long run, the stipend, although helpful, was not what kept faculty engaged. Engagement occurred because faculty were given the time to work on what mattered most to them—teaching and learning.

The college administration remains troubled by the question about ultimate effectiveness. In the interim, the administration feels that it is too early in the process to determine the real impact of such a cultural change. Based upon the years it had taken the college to first organize, implement, and then realize overall gains to first-semester persistence rates, the college is hesitant to make immediate decisions on the impact of faculty interest groups until the groups have had more terms to demonstrate success.

Beginning next fall, Nathalie will be inviting a new (and returning) group of faculty and staff to participate in the college’s collective student success work. Equally important, the budget situation for the college has improved, and faculty load is returning to previous levels.
Assistant Dean for Foundational Studies, Liberal Arts, and Sciences Janice Rogers ran late to the last All College Assembly (ACA) meeting of the fall semester. She had been dual-booked for this time slot, but she wanted to make the last moments of the meeting. If she were lucky, she’d be in time to hear the Constituency Concerns, which was the time at the end of each ACA meeting when attending faculty and staff are welcome to raise a point of interest or concern with their colleagues. However, Janice was not prepared for what she encountered when she entered the crowded room. The coordinator for the College Success Seminar (CSS) was standing in the back, holding a microphone, addressing the concerns of the faculty members who had heard rumors about the expansion of CSS, particularly how it would be required of all students at Northern Essex Community College (NECC). The coordinator seemed uncomfortable and stunned by the comments. Faculty members seemed angry and were quite vocal about their concerns.

As she entered the meeting, Janice first thought she had forgotten that CSS was an ACA agenda item, but she knew it had not been so. This was an impromptu discussion of CSS raised by faculty members who had been misinformed, potentially by Janice herself. She remembered a week earlier at a steering committee meeting where she enthusiastically discussed the tentative plans for expanding the CSS course at the college. A key part of the plan was making CSS a required course for all students new to college. She thought she had made it clear to the steering committee that this expansion was a plan up for future discussion, not a set policy, but that appeared not to be the case. From that meeting, the rumor that CSS would be a requirement for all students spread across academic departments, and was not well received by everyone it reached. Now, a few vocal faculty members took turns at the microphone expressing their concerns and suspicions about a course that they perceived as unnecessary, and having bypassed the normal processes to become a requirement at the college, including open discussions at meetings such as the ACA; proposals to and approval from academic affairs; and approval of significant changes to financial aid and graduation requirements for students.

Janice listened to the sudden out-pouring of anger and confusion around expanding the course, and to the litany of complaints about its utility in the lives of students and faculty.

“But it’s a developmental course; my students don’t need to take this.”

“We can’t require a non-transferable, college-level course of our students. It isn’t fair, especially if they don’t need to take it.”

“Students don’t need an entire semester of study skills. They want to get on with their degrees.”

“So many of our degree programs are already maxed out on allowable credit hours; there is no way that we can add another course.”
Janice’s exasperation matched that of her colleagues, and she was not sure what to say to all of this. Although the majority of the disapproval came from a small group, they were much more outspoken than their colleagues who did support CSS. As she listened to their complaints, some not founded in any truth, she grew concerned about the impact the conversation might be having on those staff and faculty members in attendance who did not have a strong opinion one way or the other. Would these few loud protests grow into something larger? In her mind she considered the complaints, weighing out truth from rumor: this course is not developmental; it’s a 100 level college-credit bearing course. Once we expand the course to all students, we can work on making it transferable and on finding ways to fit it into different programs. Anyway, they would have taken the same course at any other college so we are doing them a disservice if we don’t offer this class—there is so much more to the class besides study skills. Janice felt discouraged. Despite all the hard work done by the committee to create and grow CSS, there were still an enormous number of misconceptions swirling around the room that afternoon. Janice wondered: Where did our best laid plans go awry?

BACKGROUND

Nestled in the Merrimack Valley of Massachusetts, Northern Essex Community College serves a wide range of students, including traditional high school graduates who are just starting their academic careers; nontraditional students such as returning adults and ESL students; and working professionals who attend NECC to earn certificates in their field. As an academic institution, NECC is dedicated to student engagement, personal and professional growth, and educational excellence for students. One of the many ways that NECC reaches these and other goals is by providing an affordable education to anyone who comes through its doors. However, simply getting students to the door is not enough to ensure their life-long academic and career success. Like many colleges and universities across the country, NECC struggles with retaining students through to the completion of their degrees or programs. Janice remembers when NECC took this struggle to the college team developing the Achieving the Dream (ATD) initiative for guidance.

Achieving the Dream is a coalition of colleges from across the United States that has come together to experiment with strategies that will improve student outcomes, and to share data demonstrating the success of intervention. Northern Essex became an ATD college in 2007, at which point Janice and 20 others on the ATD core team began work on improving rates of student retention and completion. From the outset, this was a more challenging prospect than it appeared. Several initiatives – all based on sound research – were put forth as possible ways to address the problem of keeping students engaged through graduation. Despite the best intentions of each of these initiatives, the result was not improved retention, but a smattering of programs that could reach only a limited number of students at any one time. Despite a year’s worth of committee meetings and discussions, the ATD core team was still struggling to institutionalize its selected interventions. Janice later recalled those eighteen months as a “dashboard of options.” She felt that there was a light or a switch for everything, and yet the team was not accomplishing its goal.

Janice remembered the ATD coaches telling her and the others on the core team, “You have to choose one thing. You cannot spread your programs, your resources, and your people this thin; it’s not efficient and it is not going to be effective.” During a December 2009 visit from their ATD coaches, Janice and the other core team members got a clear, although hard to hear, message: the scattershot approach to retention and completion initiatives was not working. The coaches told them, “Of all of these initiatives, you need to choose the one that can reach the largest percentage of your students, has the clearest track-record of success at this and other institutions, and that you can manage with the resources you have.” Janice walked away from that meeting realizing the team had spent three semesters trying new things; but now it was time to buckle down, make a decision, and see it through.
Based on the recommendations of the ATD coaches and national data supporting the strategy’s effectiveness, Janice and the team decided that a first year experience (FYE) course could have the greatest potential for improving retention and completion. A team of 12 people, including Janice, made up the initial FYE strategy team, which was tasked with overseeing the development of this initiative. In the first few months of 2010, a smaller curriculum committee was carved out of the original FYE team. This committee was composed of four full-time faculty members from the division of foundational studies, liberal arts, and sciences; the dean of professional development; and was chaired by the dean of law, education, and social professions. This small group developed the course – to be known as the College Success Seminar – and it was approved by the college’s governance system by the end of that spring semester. For the first two years, the curriculum was predetermined by the committee, to ensure continuity and make it easier to measure student outcomes. A comprehensive three-day training was provided to faculty interested in teaching the course. The training provided information about curricular components, such as reading apprenticeship strategies and strengths based-learning, and helped instructors become familiar with the textbook and major assignments. The first sections of CSS were opened and ran in the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011.

During that first year, the course was considered to be in a pilot phase. This meant a very limited number of courses could be offered, which required decisions to be made about who could and should take the course that first year, and what the curriculum would be. Each of the sections was offered only to dual developmental students who had tested into college reading, the higher of the two developmental reading courses. To establish the course, decisions needed to be made about students who would participate in the pilot. Traditionally, NECC’s weakest retention rates come from the cohort of students who test into developmental classes. These classes are designed to strengthen literacy and mathematics strategies and knowledge for students who test below the threshold of “college readiness” on the entrance exam. NECC is not the only college in Massachusetts that recognizes the correlation between placement in developmental classes and issues with retention and completion. The ATD coaches advised Janice and the others that “Because CSS will be a college-level course, but one that is designed to strengthen their academic self-concept and strategy use, it will be a good fit for our developmental students.” To Janice and the others on the core team, it was a sound and logical claim, which led to the CSS course being offered first to developmental students.

The course was developed in complete modules called “just in time” units that instructors delivered in a predetermined order. In addition to the modules, every section read Stephen Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Throughout the two semesters, data were frequently collected. Formal, anonymous surveys were given nearly every week and informal feedback was gathered via flashcards handed out at the end of class periods. Both of these tools measured students’ impression of the curriculum. Students’ achievement was carefully monitored at the end of each semester by NECC’s institutional research team. Although the process was labor intensive and sometimes tedious, the results were worth it. At the end of the first year, CSS had data showing it could make a difference in student success. The course was positively impacting the college’s developmental students, the most vulnerable students at the college. The completion rate for developmental students co-enrolled in CSS was 20 percent higher than the rate for students not taking CSS. Ninety percent of co-enrolled developmental reading and writing students were completing with at least a C, compared to 61 percent and 69 percent of non-CSS students, respectively. Successful completion of the CSS course also made a significant difference in student retention; those students who earned at least a C in CSS but did not successfully complete their developmental coursework still returned for the spring semester at a rate of 90 percent—only 4 percent lower than students who did complete their developmental courses, and 53 percent higher than students who did not receive a C or higher in their developmental coursework or CSS. Janice and the core team members were pleased to show their progress to the ATD coaches.
ENGAGING FACULTY AND STAFF IN THE STUDENT SUCCESS AGENDA

Over the next four semesters, the course continued to change and grow in ways that would allow it to reach more students. In the fall of 2009, there were only 54 students enrolled across three sections of CSS; a mere 3 percent of the target population and only 0.7 percent of the overall NECC student population. But each semester, the course was offered to more and more students, and significant changes were made to the curriculum to make the course more robust. Student feedback from the surveys and flashcards was used to make content and delivery changes, improving students’ perception of the course. During the second year of the pilot, the Covey book was no longer required and instructors were encouraged to create a theme for their course around a trade book of their choosing. The curriculum modules were still available, but as their comfort with teaching the course increased, instructors were given more freedom in the timing and delivery of each. In the fall of 2012, enrollment increased when the course became required for any student enrolled in either two or three developmental courses, and was made available to any other students at the college who wished to take it. By the fall of 2013, the enrollment of CSS had increased across the board; from 54 students in 2009, it had grown to 566 in four years, reflected in the need for 31 sections. A full 37 percent of the target population of new degree-seeking students was being served, 7.7 percent of the overall college student body. Although these numbers represented only a small portion of NECC’s enrollment, it was a huge step in the right direction. Importantly, the completion rates in developmental courses of students who successfully completed CSS continued to be greater than that of their peers who did not take the course.

Naturally, the number of sections each semester increased, requiring additional instructors. CSS was seen by the college as a way to engage a much larger number of faculty and staff in a teaching opportunity that directly affected student success. The curriculum modules were replaced with a common textbook that was used in all of the sections of CSS, along with whatever trade book the instructor chose to complement the course theme. Each of these changes was based on feedback from the student surveys, course evaluations, and open discussions with instructors, as well as the continuing trend in NECC’s institutional research data to show that CSS was improving developmental student outcomes. It was during this period from July of 2012 until June 2014 that NECC was awarded the PRESS Grant that supported the growing needs of the CSS curriculum and instructors. For example, the money from this grant was used to provide faculty stipends for biannual trainings, which allowed more instructors to become familiar with the course goals and outcomes, and to have the opportunity to teach the course. The grant also funded the revision of the assessment rubrics used by faculty to determine students’ achievement, and the dissemination of the rubrics – along with other essential curricular information – to the growing body of faculty and staff involved in the course. Overall, as CSS grew and changed, the PRESS grant was an invaluable resource in ensuring quality in the process and products of CSS. In this way, the PRESS grant increased faculty and staff engagement in student success work.

The growth of the course did carry some risk – having several new instructors and a less structured curriculum meant more variables for Janice and the curriculum team to manage. In order to maintain the course’s integrity, CSS instructors were asked to attend an extensive training over the summer and two follow-up meetings during the school year. This ensured continuity of the overall course goals across an ever-expanding curriculum. By the fall of 2013, more than 80 instructors – a mix of part- and full-time faculty, and staff members from academic advising, financial aid, and learning accommodations – had completed at least one five-hour training course. The CSS coordinator regularly had more instructors wanting to teach the course than she had sections available. To Janice and the others on the core team, it seemed like everyone on the campus was on board with the course and believed in its power to positively impact students’ success.

FORGING A NEW PATH

However, as the ACA meeting unraveled – and in the discussions over email throughout the following days – a few painful truths became evident to Janice and the others on the core team. CSS had unintentionally taken
on a reputation as a remedial course. Although the faculty and staff involved with the curriculum understood and supported the development of the course, many people on campus were largely unaware of the goals and methods used in CSS. Despite all the work that had been done, little attention had been paid to how this course could and would fit into students’ already packed programs. Because so many people were unaware of the course, they felt it was a “new” initiative being shoved at them without their input. Janice knew how precariously the CSS expansion hung in the balance of those who supported the expansion and those who did not. She and the strategy team needed to do more to understand the key reasons why there was so much confusion and anger over the expansion of CSS. The first step was to legitimately get on the agenda for the next ACA meeting in January. After that, Janice would have to make time to have some open, honest conversations.

Janice, the CSS coordinator, and their colleagues had several weeks to prepare for the next ACA meeting at which CSS was the main agenda item. They put together a comprehensive presentation that addressed as many of the concerns as possible. It had never occurred to Janice that the course was so poorly understood. She had been so immersed in it for five years, and this immersion created a false sense of the course’s popularity on campus. Despite the number of people involved in ATD initiatives at NECC, only a small group – less than 30 people – had been intimately involved with the development of the CSS itself. While many faculty and staff members supported the idea of CSS, few of them had attended curriculum workshops or could speak concisely about the goals and outcomes of the course. This left them vulnerable to the protestations of the vocal few who were speaking out against CSS as they had no way of discerning truth from rumor. Therefore, the first step in expanding the course had to be increasing awareness and understanding of CSS. One of the primary objectives of the presentation was to outline the curriculum of the CSS course, and to highlight how the course would support students in every classroom at NECC.

Janice also realized that related to this misunderstanding was the reputation of the course. What couldn’t have been accounted for in the initial implementation of the CSS course pilot was the stigma it would create for the course. Developmental classes carry non-transferable, non-college-level credits, which gives them a stigma of being “not real” college classes. When the CSS classes first opened their doors to developmental students, they also opened themselves to being seen as “not real” among some members of the faculty, staff, and student body on campus. That perception meant that many of Janice’s colleagues failed to see the value of the course for all incoming students. In Janice’s mind, this misconception presented one of the greatest challenges to scaling up the course.

Janice hoped the CSS presentation at the ACA would make more transparent the process by which CSS was developed. She and her team presented their colleagues with the history of FYE courses at various colleges around the country, and explained how those examples helped NECC to create CSS. Janice knew that the examples were not all perfect, and they would inevitably lead to more questions. Many four-year colleges had significant positive outcomes related to their FYE courses, but they didn’t have the same constraints on credit hours as community colleges. Many community colleges had found ways to include FYE courses for their students, but failed to see the same magnitude of impact from the course. These differences raised important questions about the logistics of trying to fit another credit-bearing course into programs that were already at their credit limit. Would this course take the place of other courses which were just as important? Would the burden to both students and faculty be worth it in the end? Making this situation even more complicated was the range of credits open to students in any given program. Many of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs were at their absolute limit, while some of the liberal arts programs had more space. There would be no one answer to the question of how to add the course to students’ schedules.
The presentation also included an overview of the college’s data on CSS. Janice felt that all of the preliminary CSS data looked positive, but even that notion was disputed by some. She realized that even the interpretation of the numbers rested on each person’s assumptions about the course. While proponents of the course felt that differences in retention, completion, and grade point average for students taking CSS showed a positive trend, those with misinformation or doubts were less able to see that growth. Heated disputes arose about how to interpret the numbers, making clear how tenuous even the acceptance of quantitative data could be. Again, Janice realized that her perception of the course was not as widely shared as she had thought. She and her group had seen the positive trend, but perhaps had not asked the right follow-up questions about how and why it was present.

The ACA presentation was well-received, but it was not enough. Over the course of the semester, Janice and her team followed up the meeting with several open forums for staff and faculty to discuss the CSS course, and its future at NECC. Faculty and staff members that could not attend the open forums also had the opportunity to participate in an online forum. These forums, stressful at first, became an integral part of reframing the course and determining its growth. Janice had learned the hard way that it is essential to be transparent about the development of a new initiative, and that providing information followed by open discussion at regular intervals was essential to gaining acceptance. These follow-up meetings filled that purpose—better late than never. They provided the shrinking number of opposed faculty a forum in which to voice their concerns, and receive immediate feedback. They also gave Janice and other supporters a chance to see the course from the perspective of people who had not been a part of the initiative from the beginning. It created a healthy dialogue that valued legitimate concerns and helped separate out the rumors and misinformation. Janice and her team took all of the feedback and set to work drafting a proposal for expanding the CSS course at NECC.

EPILOGUE

New England is known for its winters, yet this year seemed worse than ever. But change is inevitable – in institutions and in seasons – so on a beautiful May morning, after a semester’s worth of drafting and revising, Janice found herself seated at her desk with a near-final version of a concrete proposal for expanding the CSS course at NECC in her hands. Janice reflected on the journey she and the others took in preparing this proposal. Throughout this process, they had learned valuable lessons. One was centered on the stigma attached to CSS because of its early connection to developmental students; therefore, the new proposal included a renaming of the College Success Seminar to the First Year Seminar. Janice hoped that changing the name of the course would give it a fresh start. Another lesson reflected the importance of discussion on a college campus to keep everyone informed about initiatives and change. The series of discussions to follow-up the ACA allowed for small groups of faculty and staff to ask questions, to express their opinions, and to receive answers that helped separate truth from rumor in a setting where every voice could be heard—positive and doubtful alike. These discussions also clarified the major goals and benefits of the course, and resulted in many of the items that appeared in the proposal for expanding CSS at NECC, such as the exact description of the student population for whom CSS would be a mandatory course, and a list of criteria for exemption from that requirement. They also began the process for having CSS become a transferable course that could be fit into the existing programs of study at NECC. A final lesson revealed the importance of faculty and staff engagement. These discussions had highlighted the need to create a curriculum that everyone valued. The more faculty and staff became engaged with the discussions, the more comfortable they became with the goals and curriculum of CSS, making it a stronger course that gained wider acceptance on campus. In Janice’s mind, months of heated debate seemed to have been replaced by an informed calm.

That afternoon, the first chapter would conclude; Janice was set to present this proposal to the ATD core team and ask for their feedback. But a single chapter is not a story, and much more needed to be written. Following
the team’s approval, there would be two full years of work necessary to complete the process of making CSS a required, transferable course for all new students. She took a deep breath and prepared herself for the next big step for CSS.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do we effectively discuss and build consensus around one of the best-known yet most controversial facts facing community colleges: many of our students do not arrive ready to succeed? What are the benefits of involving faculty and staff from across disciplines when designing interventions aimed at improving college-readiness?

2. How do we address the concerns of colleagues who believe that the very act of offering assistance or a curriculum that is “below college level” damages the college’s legitimacy and prestige? How can a college foster an identity of support without compromising rigor and academic integrity?

3. What are the elements that need to be considered when piloting an initiative? For example, how do you determine who needs to be in a pilot? How can careful consideration of these elements prevent stigmas or misunderstandings from developing as the program expands?

4. What are the potential challenges to the scale-up of an initiative that began as a small pilot? To what extent and how must decisions to alter the details of an initiative at scale-up be justified? Who should be involved in those decisions, and at what point?

5. What are some of the possible ways to gain adequate support for an initiative while maintaining its essential elements (i.e. how can you avoid watering down a proposal during the process of building political support for it)?

6. What is the best way to involve all potential stakeholders in an intervention—as members of an initial think tank, or as reactors to the initiative in focus groups later, or both?

7. How schooled in data analysis and presentation must presenters of an initiative be, especially since ATD initiatives need to be data-driven?

8. For NECC, allocation of resources was never central to the debate about expanding CSS. How might this dilemma be different if the question of financial resources had been at the heart of faculty and staff concerns about scale up?
YAKIMA VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE: FACULTY AND STAFF ENGAGEMENT AROUND ACADEMIC ADVISING

Gordon Koestler & Wilma Dulin, Yakima Valley Community College

THE CASE: INTRODUCTION

“It is imperative that we look at higher education for the twenty-first century not through the lenses of Newton and Descartes but of Einstein and Bohr, whose science is not of matter and mechanism but of relationships and dynamic processes.”
- Parker J. Palmer and Arthur Zajonc, The Heart Of Higher Education

Academic advising at Yakima Valley Community College at times has been fraught with confusion, anxiety, frustration, and fear of the unknown—and that only describes the faculty response. As teachers, we come to our calling at the college with wide range of interests, expertise, and interpersonal skills, but overall our goal is to teach and to help students learn to be better advocates for themselves in whatever community they find themselves, as learners, as professionals, or as citizens. However, the various paths we have taken to that end—and that we recommend as professionals—are as different as our individual faculty members. However, we are called contractually and as representatives of the Academy to provide “academic advising” for our students. The question we at YVCC have been debating literally for decades now is how best to do that. Perhaps it is because we have been asking the wrong question? Perhaps instead we should address the question that Palmer and Zajonc pose in the introduction of their book, from which the above quotation was taken:

Do current educational efforts [including advising] address the whole human being—mind, heart, and spirit—in ways that contribute best to our future on this fragile planet? How can we help our colleges and universities become places that awaken the deepest potential in students, faculty, and staff?

The fact that many of our faculty and some staff would argue that question very differently, and passionately, is why this conversation on our campus is so important. These are some of the stories and scenarios that we continue to face as we try to do best by our students, our colleagues, and our communities.

- Gordon Koestler, English instructor, and Wilma Dulin, PRESS-Achieving the Dream, and Title V Coordinator

THE ISSUES, AS IDENTIFIED IN THE CASE

• Specific faculty roles in advising have not been spelled out, either contractually, by the administration, or by faculty members themselves. Most faculty have been content—and even argue strongly for—advising only those students who have identified themselves as “majors” or participants in their areas of academic expertise. This philosophy, however, has resulted in an imbalance in the number of advisees in some cases, particularly among workforce education division faculty (too many) and arts and sciences faculty (too few).

• ‘Academic advising’ itself has never been adequately defined nor its goal effectively articulated. By default, “academic advising” for decades has meant faculty meeting and greeting new students who have been pre-sorted by declared “major” interest, quickly assessing their academic status—what classes they might need to get started on their careers—then registering them for any available classes, telling
them to check in with their advisors, then going on to the next student. Some faculty take more time in assessing “whole student” needs; some take less and are admittedly uncomfortable with what they see as a “counselor” role, one best played by trained counselors, who then become default academic advisors. No one is happy with this model, and campus leadership has sought various solutions over the years, including the PRESS-funded “Academic Pathways” model.

• **Faculty fear and/or reluctance to advise students outside their scope of academic expertise.**
  One obstacle to a more comprehensive faculty role in academic advising, such as the one proposed by the academic pathways model, is a reluctance by faculty to provide specific career or academic advice to students whose interests lie outside their discipline expertise or training. Some observers say faculty simply fear being seen as not knowing all the correct answers or even knowing which questions to ask – a case of simple human nature – while others argue that, for example, an English department faculty member should not be giving career or degree advice to nursing majors. Some arts and sciences faculty in particular claim they are reluctant to provide what may be confusing information to such students.

Advising students for discipline-specific studies or transfer degrees, therefore, is more traditionally and specifically their role. PRESS-academic pathways advocates, however, specifically the counseling faculty who end up as “default” academic advisors in many cases, suggest that “cross-training” among faculty across both campuses is possible with the pathways model. Also, English and mathematics, for example, are requirements for almost all YVCC degrees and certificates. Therefore, advocates argue, it might be beneficial to students and their teaching colleagues if faculty from those departments know how their courses impact instruction and curriculum throughout the system. Again, the conversations now taking place as part of the pathways model could help alleviate such fear and reluctance, while providing new curriculum insights and professional development opportunities.

• **Students ‘don’t know what they don’t know’: Common assumptions.** One of the common, perhaps unconscious assumptions of many faculty who themselves either were well-focused as students (or perhaps have forgotten what it is like to be a new student on a college campus) is that students show up focused on what it is they want to do, which classes to take, how to finance their education (or able to locate the resources to do so), and that they have thought-through all the contingencies that life might throw at them. However, the reality for community-college students, many of whom are first-generation college students and/or second-language or Generation 1.5 students, is that they DON’T know the answers and they don’t know how to go about finding them. Instead, they rely on word of mouth, self-advising, and the advice of “friends,” who often steer them into “easy” classes that may not fill degree or certificate prerequisites. Students also do not know what academic rigor might be required of a nurse or a dental hygienist, because they don’t actually know a nurse and don’t know how to go about researching the prerequisites for the dental hygiene program. The upshot is that, although classes remain near capacity, student completion actually has dipped somewhat in recent years as students run out of financial aid, personal resources, and become frustrated in general with the process and the institution. More comprehensive advising, perhaps as part of the “Pathways” model, would help keep students on track and provide more “intervention” points.

• **Role of staff and other support folks.** “Academic advising” has most commonly been identified with faculty and perhaps counseling department and registration staff members. However, for many years now – since 2007 and a trip to a NACADA conference by several faculty, administrators, and at least one staff member – “advising” has been identified as a campus-wide responsibility. The goal is to keep students from “pinballing” on campus from one department to another, one person to another, and getting frustrated, lost, and just quitting. If more people – staff, adjunct faculty, custodians, etc. – knew more about the roles of each department and office on campus, students would get more information and feel more welcome in general. Simple things such as signage in both English and Spanish could help.
And, according to campus surveys, most staff and support employees say that want to know more in order to give students the best advice possible and keep them in pursuit of their dreams. Time, training, and other budget expenditures could help students make a positive connection with almost anyone on campus.

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CASE STUDY ONE
Gordon Koestler
Tenured English instructor
Yakima campus

The quarterly game of chance called student “advising” was upon him once again. Gordon knew that the process, which constituted enrolling as many students as fast as one could in a two-hour block, was more simply “registration” than “advising.” After all, what kind of life-altering educational, career, and financial advice could you give someone 20 minutes after meeting them? Shouldn’t students already know what kind of classes they needed to be “teachers,” if that’s what they planned to be? And shouldn’t they also have the financial wherewithal to pay for classes? Otherwise why bother showing up? Once again, he knew “advising” reflected just a roll of the dice at this point. How could it be otherwise?

MARIA VS. COLLEGE
Gordon was faced with Maria, a single mother of two with a part-time job, just starting her academic career. Her work was in a senior assisted-living community – “nursing home,” she said – which she had nevertheless found rewarding. She imagined, therefore, that she would return to school after nine years, two children, and a recent divorce to become a nurse. “I want to make a life better for my kids, you know?”

“That’s great,” Gordon told Maria. “Now do you have your COMPASS placement scores?”

“Yes,” said Maria, with an obvious Spanish accent and a hopeful smile. “Here is what they give me.” MATH 050 – Arithmetic. Three or four levels below college-level mathematics. ENGL 090-T. Two levels below college-level writing courses. “Do you know what classes I have to take, Mr. Koestler?” Gordon knew, and the news was not good. Nurses needed chemistry courses, and chemistry courses required a mathematics prerequisite from which Maria was at least a year away, starting at MATH 050. And Maria’s game but broken English obviously needed some polish, perhaps even more than two quarters of pre-college-level writing courses could provide. “And Mr. Koestler? Can I take only night classes? My mother helps me with my kids but she can only help me at night? Can you help me, Mr. Koestler?”

As a matter of fact, he could not help Maria, at least not to the level she needed. All the MATH 050 classes already were full, and no ENGL 090-T classes were offered after 2 p.m. Gordon tried for the next hour to find 12 credits of courses that did not require mathematics or an English prerequisites. Phys ed, a writing center workshop course? An information technology course? Something online? (“No, Mr. Koestler, my computer is not so good for the Internet. And I would rather be in the classroom with the people and the teacher, you know?”)

ADVICE AND ASSUMPTIONS
Gordon finally finished finding enough credits to enroll Maria full-time, knowing full well that only her personal determination not to fail would allow her to be successful in the coming quarter alone. And what about subsequent quarters? Even if Maria was successful and eventually got into the prerequisite courses for chemistry and biology, the other gateway courses in nursing, the chances of her actually completing her coursework were
incredibly slim, based on YVCC’s own completion statistics in a six-year window when students start in pre-college courses in both mathematics and English. And what would be going on with her family during that time? Cost almost certainly would be an issue, as well as childcare and class availability, if his initial brush with Maria’s situation were any indication. Shouldn’t she be getting – and sometime soon! – advice about a practical nursing degree, something she could parlay into a more sophisticated healthcare career later? Meanwhile, she could be helping to put her family on more stable financial ground. But could he make that decision for her? Shouldn’t she be allowed to fail first?

Gordon finished Maria’s schedule and printed it out on the network printer in the rear of the computer lab. “Now it looks like you still owe some money for tuition. Just go downstairs and talk to the ladies, and they will tell you what you need to do.” Maria looked at her paper schedule, then up at Gordon, then back at down at her schedule, then began to walk uncertainly toward the door. Ugh!

“Hey, Maria, give me your schedule,” he said, trying to sound cheery. “See? Here is your advisor’s name right here,” and he circled it with his pen. “Contact her by e-mail as soon as you can, or maybe go by her office to see when she has her office hour. She can help you by telling you what you need to do for nursing.” Maria’s face reflected another unsure expression. Gordon grabbed his pen again. “Here: If you can’t get a hold of your advisor, here is my email address and office phone number. You can contact me anytime.” Maria’s expression brightened.

REFLECTIONS AND CHALLENGES
Gordon had seen this expression at least once each quarter during an advising session. Maria had made a contact in a strange new land, and Gordon had come to know how valuable this contact would be, both interpersonally and statistically over the months and years. He remembered his own two-year college experience and what it meant for an academic advisor to meet with him off-campus, on a holiday, when no other on-campus time would work due to his full-time blue-collar job and the distance he lived from the Green River Community College campus at the time. That was one reason he set out to be a community college teacher.

Community colleges are the first bridge between vocational “blue collar” or “pink collar” workers and the “white collars” of the Academy. And even though the college has a “student-centered” piece to its mission statement, he wondered how many of his “expert” arts and sciences division colleagues assumed their students were all (or should be) self-directed learners and independent self-sustaining, self-advocates. That might be the only way they would survive in an institution that, despite its best intentions and best work of its best staff and faculty, seemed to have stacked the deck against non-traditional students on several fronts.

THE PATHWAYS MODEL
In December of 2012, Gordon was part of a 17-member team that sought to address the limits of and possible solutions to academic advising at YVCC, including more closely defining the role of faculty in the process. (See the Elizabeth DeVilleneuve case study elsewhere in this document, as well as interviews and histories in Appendix B) The focus group represented a broad range of faculty participants, plus a few staff members. Faculty and counselors admitted that few students show up on campus with a career or academic goal, not to mention a completed academic plan to get them there. However, they DO come with some particular “career interest” in mind. The proposed pathways model would seek to sort students based on those interests. Faculty, then, would participate in an advising process that had the additional advantage of identifying how specifically disciplines and courses – mathematics and English in particular – actually contribute to students completing degrees and certificates across the campus.
Initially, many faculty resisted the notion that “advising” included academic advice outside of their particular discipline or area of expertise. Some said that, in reality, they were afraid to give faulty advice or to waste students’ time and money. Still others worried that, for example, an English instructor would not be able to give accurate academic-planning advice to a nursing student. However, discussions continued, hands were wrung over academic calendars, models were tweaked, many fears were allayed, and in spring of 2014, Gordon was part of the “healthcare pathways” model that had volunteered to pilot the pathways advising model.

**NEXT STEPS**

Though there is still more work to do to fine tune the model, Gordon feels that the “areas of interest” notion is more comfortable and accepting than forcing a student on the spot to declare a major, track down an advisor, and maybe get lost in the mists of Planet Academia before they ever get a chance to succeed. The pathways model, with its team of faculty and staff support, more readily addresses the academic concerns of the “whole student.” Plus, he gets a chance to talk with his colleagues about how the outcomes of his English 101 course will affect the students in the dental hygiene program, many of whom have been cleaning his teeth for 20 or so years. There is still work to be done and salesmanship to undertake, but Gordon believes that future Marias and Edwards who bravely show up at YVCC wanting to change their lives for the better will now stand a better chance with academic pathways advising.

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**CASE STUDY TWO**

*Tim Jeske*

*Tenured Political Science instructor*

*Arts and Sciences division*

*Yakima campus*

“I’ve never understood advising to be oriented toward a career pathway.” In other words, “academic advising” should not be vocational in nature unless one is advising students who plan to pursue jobs that traditionally have been considered part of workforce education. That is the position of Dr. Tim Jeske, “a liberal arts instructor who happens to teach political science.” And he is not alone in that assessment among YVCC’s full-time arts and sciences faculty.

**BACKGROUND**

Jeske has been a leading voice in curriculum assessment, AFT-Yakima union negotiations, contract language, online instruction, and other campus-wide issues and initiatives at YVCC for 20 years. He sees the mission of academic advising at the traditional two-year schools, as well as the purpose of the liberal-arts curriculum in general, as the means to give students the foundation and “strength” to succeed at their next educational opportunity, especially those students working toward a direct transfer agreement, he said. Jeske acknowledged that he falls into the liberal-arts tradition of using advising to “help students along their own authentic journey of self-discovery and to develop a sense of self-awareness.”

**THE PATHWAY MODEL**

Jeske admits “some discomfort” with the pathways method of sorting students into general areas of study when they enroll, with a ready-made cadre of advisors from across the general-education curriculum. That model assumes that all students are “career-minded or career-thinking,” he said. The workforce education division, he added, has a different mission. Criminal justice or dental hygiene, for example, require particular skill sets for particular jobs. As a pathways team member advising those two vocations, “I would not have the same sense of
mission or purpose doing that,” Jeske noted.

He added that he doesn’t want to be part of an advising process in which the outcome is to have students leave the college and go right into a job.

“I know that’s what sells to the legislature, but that’s not what I am about,” Jeske noted. “Most of us in the liberal arts are not about that, either.”

**NEXT STEPS**
Admitting that some mass initial advising is necessary, Jeske recommends the new-student-orientation model that the college had been using up until very recently, plus some classroom curriculum support. For example, Jeske noted that he had been involved in greeting students during NSO and sorting them according to whether they wanted to pursue a transfer degree or a job-training career pathway, such as dental hygiene, vet tech, automotive, information technology, and the like. Jeske said such a process doesn’t take much time and can help get students started toward their ultimate educational goal. An alternative version might include an individual five- or six-minute interview with all new students during summer orientation. The interview would allow them to connect with a faculty advisor, someone who could function as the “initial faculty advisor” until a discipline- or career-specific advisor could be identified, he said.

In the classroom, Jeske recommends a model that he uses in his Political Science 101 curriculum, in which he spends lecture time in both his online and on-campus classes explaining the structure of higher education: What’s a major? What’s a college credit? What’s a transfer degree or a master’s degree or a PhD? Why do students need to take social science credits or arts credits?

“No one’s ever sat down with them to explain that at the very start,” he said, adding that other arts and sciences division instructors have similar lectures or discussions in their curricula.

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**CASE STUDY THREE**

*Amber Richards*

*Adjunct English Faculty*

*Yakima campus*

Amber Richards is a YVCC graduate who eventually came back to campus, ostensibly to teach writing, literature, critical thinking, and academic self-advocacy to students much like herself. Richards indicated she is “very comfortable” serving as an academic advisor to students, even though as an adjunct faculty member she has no contractual obligation to advise students. But Richards does teach YVCC students who need academic advising; in fact, as an instructor in the YVCC TRIO “Scaffolds to Success” learning communities the past two years, Richards actually has undertaken informal student advisees, the result of co-teaching the class with counseling and advising department faculty. However, just like other adjunct faculty – who teach about half of the classes at YVCC – Richards has not been designated for any advising “pathway” responsibilities. Further, Richards admits she has had little or no contact with the English department or the arts and sciences division about how to go about “advising” students toward YVCC degrees or certificates.

“Without TRIO,” Richards concedes, “I wouldn’t have a clue.”
BACKGROUND
Richards attended YVCC in the early 2000s, participating in the learning community “Men, Women, and Meaning-Making,” a 10-credit combination of English composition and literature courses. Eventually, she earned a master’s degree in multi-cultural literature and language from Heritage University. She taught at Heritage University full-time, then at both Heritage and YVCC, before focusing her pedagogical efforts exclusively at YVCC, especially with the TRIO program. Fall 2014, will mark the beginning of her fourth year on campus.

Richards herself was a student in the TRIO program at YVCC, so when she was looking for additional work on campus and was informed of the TRIO teaching opportunity, she saw a perfect instructional fit. Since 2010, YVCC has hosted a federal TRIO grant to better serve first-generation college students who perhaps had little or no experience with the college culture, were financially at risk, or who came from traditionally under-served populations in the Yakima Valley. The current TRIO grant aims to provide opportunities for participating students to discover what other, more traditional students perhaps take for granted about “college knowledge” and expectations, finances, career exploration, educational planning, as well as developing and cultivating family and other support – much of what advocates claim is more broadly possible with YVCC’s “Pathways” advising model. (See Appendix B.)

To translate the TRIO grant outcomes into curriculum, each fall quarter since 2010, YVCC-TRIO has sponsored up to three “Scaffolds to Success” learning communities. “Scaffolds to Success” combines pre-college Student Development 075 (3 credits) and English 095 or 090T courses (5 credits) in a “class” team taught by counseling/advising and English department faculty. In addition to the institutional outcomes for the courses, the learning communities themselves provide opportunities for students to show what they have learned about career exploration, navigating the college culture of YVCC (including catalog reviews and “translations”), managing finances, as well as evaluating academic reading and their own writing. Students also get to forge friendships, know instructors and counselors better, and therefore extend their “academic support” community long after the quarter is over, sometimes even year to year. Campus advocates claim such curriculum and community is exactly what this group of first-generation college students needs as a safety net, one many of their traditionally acclimated student peers – and many YVCC faculty – take for granted. According to the college’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness, “Scaffolds” students persist (quarter to quarter and fall to fall) at higher rates than their non-“Scaffolds” peers. Again, pathways advocates claim similar kinds of support is more readily available to students as a whole with the pathways “areas of interest” model, supported by the same campus statistics and the same national research.

Richards said that the “Scaffolds” environment has allowed her to learn the changing goals of academic advising at YVCC. She currently has a number of continuing “advisees,” graduates of her fall learning community, that she meets with formally and informally.

“Sometimes they still come to me,” says Richards, who admits that her role as an adjunct faculty member does not always allow her – and certainly does not pay her – to meet with and advise students, even though she has taught writing and thinking assignments based on the YVCC catalog, has critiqued student “education plans,” and has shared with her students the ins and outs of how to survive being a non-traditional college student.

PATHWAYS MODEL
Richards says that despite her comfort with the philosophy and research supporting the “pathways” model, she isn’t aware of the specific mechanisms or adjunct faculty responsibility, if any. “I don’t know that much about it.”
As an adjunct instructor, Richards said the information she received about student advising at YVCC came from faculty member Gordon Koestler, head of the English department when she was hired and also a TRIO “Scaffolds to Success” instructor. “I’m not sure if all [department] chairs do this,” since contractually department heads cannot supervise other employees and have rather limited duties. However, without her TRIO experience, the assistance of her then-department head, and her own initiative, Richards admits that “I would be in the dark” about student academic advising in general, not to mention the pathways model in particular.

**NEXT STEPS**

Richards, who is hoping eventually to be hired full-time at YVCC, plans to return to campus this fall as an adjunct English instructor and to continue to teach in the TRIO “Scaffolds to Success” learning communities. In general, however, adjunct faculty – who teach about half of the classes at YVCC – are largely on their own concerning academic advising. Those faculty who want to provide relevant, current, accurate information to their students on academic progress, she added, can attend department meetings and hold office hours to help them get the latest news. “But if that isn’t required of adjuncts” – and contractually it is not – “I don’t see how anyone would know how to help out a student.” Helpful and communicative department heads could help keep adjuncts in the information loop, “but that’s not always the case, either,” Richards added.

Richards’ specific recommendations for the college to improve adjunct faculty knowledge and participation in academic advising include distributing a “faculty handbook or instructional packet.” Such a collection would include key, fundamental advice and contact information to help adjuncts better direct students, even if “advising” is not part of their contract or the extra-curricular expectations for adjuncts.

“It would be incredibly helpful,” Richards said of such a packet. “It would ensure that everyone has the same information. And the adjunct has it in writing, too. Then they can’t use the excuse that they didn’t know.”

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**CASE STUDY FOUR**

*Elizabeth DeVilleneuve*

*Faculty Counselor, Current Counseling/Advising department head*

*Yakima campus*

Plenty of teaching and learning should be involved as part of academic advising, suggests Elizabeth DeVilleneuve, the YVCC faculty counselor currently at the center of a cultural change at YVCC. And for the most part, YVCC faculty members are the ones who need to do the learning. DeVilleneuve said she hopes faculty will take advantage of “cross-training and cross-mentoring” opportunities available through the proposed “Pathways” advising model. Such new learning will help “de-mystify” the process of academic advising for both students and faculty alike. “There shouldn’t be any secrets.”

**BACKGROUND**

DeVilleneuve began at YVCC in 2008. In addition to her faculty counselor and advising role, she has taught 3-credit Student Development courses as part of the TRIO developmental learning communities, “Scaffolds to Success,” offered at YVCC (SD 075 combined with English 095, one course below college-level English). Currently, she is Counseling/Advising Department chair and charged with the leadership role in converting the college to the “pathways” model of academic advising. Kathryn Bauer previously led counseling/advising academic advising activities until she retired in December of 2013.
DeVilleneuve knows first-hand the irreplaceable value of making a connection in the academic community. An English teacher in high school, Jim Bodeen, had served as her “mentor-slash-cheerleader” and was “an absolute blessing in my life.” One of Bodeen’s strengths as a teacher was to solidify DeVilleneuve’s image of herself as an academic learner.

“[Academic success] isn’t a mystery,” she said, “and it is accessible if you are given the keys to the culture, its values, and beliefs.” The pathways model, she indicated, could help in that de-mystification process, not only for students but for faculty as well.

Up until recently, faculty tended to fulfill their contractual obligations to “advise” by registering blocks of students for classes based on students’ best guesses for academic or career paths: Transfer students were separated into one room, Workforce Education students into another room or rooms, and so forth. Some faculty instantly bond with students who may be studying in their discipline, career-instruction, or academic area of expertise. Some do not. Still others don’t see that making connections with students, whom they cannot and will not advise (academically or otherwise) with any degree of certainty, to be part of their job. “I think most faculty feel most comfortable with the registration model” of advising students. “They don’t realize the difference between that and what advising can be.”

**THE PATHWAYS MODEL**

DeVilleneuve added that “lack of training, confusing messages from leadership, fear of change” all contribute to faculty reluctance to explore different models of advising. However, the decision to more fully involve faculty in the change process may mean that, in the third year of the PRESS grant initiative, changing the advising culture at YVCC may have finally reached a “tipping point,” DeVilleneuve said.

Pre-pathways and pre-PRESS grant, faculty were generally involved in day-to-day academic advising only peripherally after the “registration” stampede, DeVilleneuve said. “Beyond that,” and based on students’ anecdotal reports to the counseling/advising department, “it was just a case of [faculty] ‘catch me if you can.’” By default, then, disgruntled students would end up in the counseling/advising department for their academic advising. Admittedly, she said, counselors took student complaints “with a grain of salt”; students have responsibilities in the academic-advising process as well. However, repeated and unsolicited examples of unreturned phone calls and e-mails caused DeVilleneuve and other counselors to conclude that, pre-PRESS, “we weren’t doing as good as we could.” Any change would have to involve the faculty; the question was, how best to do that?

DeVilleneuve noted that one of the advantages to the pathways model is that it is “research-driven,” an academic process that most faculty respect. Also, consultant Davis Jenkins, in a recent YVCC campus visit that underscored his own research, noted that “faculty buy-in, ownership, and direction” need to occur before any meaningful change can happen. Discussions between faculty focus groups and departments have helped push the process forward, said DeVilleneuve, to the point that the “healthcare pathways” – representing nursing, radiologic technology, dental hygiene, and allied health professions, among others, as well as representatives of Adult Basic Education, mathematics, English, and other pertinent arts and sciences faculty – served as a pilot academic advising process this past spring. DeVilleneuve said that the conversations have helped defuse the “control issues, the power struggles, the ‘fear’ issues” so that the model perhaps now has more supporters than detractors. Or at least the skeptics are willing to give the model time to evolve, she said.

“The ‘fear’ voices are becoming fewer.”
NEXT STEPS
Feedback on the spring healthcare pathways pilot has been “promising,” DeVilleneuve said. She added that there was evidence of some cross-training and cross-mentoring occurring between disciplines and programs, evidence of the “big hope” that DeVilleneuve has for the pathways project as it evolves. The counselor said that such appreciation and understanding of each other’s work is critical to cross-training and cross-mentoring, “because we just don’t get many of those opportunities to model for each other.”

And to those few faculty who still claim they are uncomfortable working with any student who falls outside their particular area of academic expertise or that they just don’t know what to do with someone who wants to explore nursing, for example, DeVilleneuve has an emphatic answer, which she said underscore’s the college’s student-centered mission:

“Every student is ‘our student’ at every step of the process … and we all have something to contribute!”

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CASE STUDY FIVE
Heidi Matlack
Faculty Counselor, Full-time
Grandview campus

If you’re a student, the most confusing, discouraging, or aggravating thing about trying to find information about a new education path is the feeling of being “pinballed around” from one office to the next, from one person to the next, without ever getting a definitive or even a workable answer, or even knowing if you are asking the right questions. Grandview campus faculty Counselor Heidi Matlack reports that many confused, banged-around students inevitably end up in the counseling office for academic advice or help. She suspects, however, that many others just give up and go home, frustrated and annoyed. It’s that cadre of discouraged students that she and other members of the Grandview campus community in particular wanted to address in trying to re-envision academic advising.

“I think it’s more guidance,” she said, assuring students that they are on the right path or, more importantly, in the right place. Matlack then underscored the importance of forging a connection with students so that they feel comfortable checking in with people if they get confused. Such a philosophy helps alleviate and address student confusion and contributes to student retention, she said. Academic advising, then, is more about relationship building than “just signing up for classes.” And, according to Matlack, it requires a campus-wide effort that includes more than just faculty. Just as importantly, and sometimes maybe even more so, it includes the campus staff.

“Advising happens the first time they step on campus,” Matlack notes. If that first contact is a secretary, a receptionist, or a custodian, those members of the campus community need to be ready with answers. And, Matlack notes, her research at YVCC indicates they want to be ready.

BACKGROUND
Matlack has been working on the YVCC Grandview campus for six years, since 2008. In addition to her counseling and advising duties for student support services and disability support services, she has taught reading and student development courses, as well as General Psychology (PSYCH 100). Matlack also has taught several Student Development 075 sections, with an English instructor (ENGL 095), as part of in a TRIO
“learning community” in Grandview.

ACADEMIC ADVISING: IMPROVEMENTS IN COMMUNICATION

The PRESS grant piece that Matlack undertook was the PACE “Staff Satisfaction” survey administered in the spring of 2013 – part of a larger college employee survey including administrators, faculty, and “exempt” employees that is conducted every three years. New questions were generated as an outgrowth of a series of 17 to 20 focus groups conducted in August of 2012. As Matlack herself reported:

The focus groups were designed to find out what the staff needed to assist them in their role of advising, as we realize advising begins when the student first steps on campus, and often staff are the first point of contact. The results from the focus groups informed us that staff felt like there needed to be better communication throughout the institution, including how to do things they need to know.

Matlack cataloged the differing responses to questions among the employee groups designed to illustrate what changes could be made to improve communication and, therefore, advising:

- Faculty and exempt employees showed slightly stronger support on the questions specifically regarding advising roles.
- Administrators and classified staff showed slightly stronger support on the questions regarding changes in policies and procedures in departments and having professional development and formal trainings on campus procedures.
- All employee groups showed strong support on the questions regarding revising the college website to reflect “friendlier” language and to ease accessibility in general, as well as ease access to the college catalog.
- All employee groups showed strong support for conducting new employee orientations.
- All employee groups showed very little support for either regular social activities or increasing staff involvement in convocation.

NEXT STEPS

For staff, then, Matlack came away from the survey with specific recommendations on what campus tools would be most useful to increase on-campus communication. In part, the new “tools” would include (1) an upgrade in signage on both the Yakima and Grandview campuses to include signs in both English and Spanish and (2) “building-specific” signage that is visible to passers-by from the street. Other possible improvements to communication could include a “Frequently Asked Questions” sheet, updated regularly. Such an FAQ sheet would be available in Grandview, for example, at the front desk in the reception area and elsewhere on campus. Also, staff members could visit other campus offices to find out “What do you do in this department?” and specific departments’ contributions to advising in particular and the college mission in general could be better articulated. Some new, more comprehensive training in regard to new student orientation (NSO) would also be helpful, she added.

Matlack admitted that at least on Grandview campus, the college to this point has not done as much with the information generated by the PACE survey as was intended.

“Unfortunately,” she said, “funding-wise, some of those things aren’t there.”
THE SOLUTION TO ISSUES OUTLINED IN THE CASE
With the help of the Walmart Foundation and Achieving the Dream, Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) focused on increasing the breadth and depth of faculty and student service leaders’ involvement with student success through the redesign of the advising program. The following outlines the ongoing challenges and the suggested solutions the college is undertaking to address them:

GOALS

• **Increase retention rates from the first to the second year.** One of YVCC’s strategies for Achieving the Dream was to focus on the first-year experience, including the creation of new placement options, ending late registration, and implementing a mandatory new student orientation (NSO) program. First quarter retention rates rose by about 4 percent overall, and previous retention gaps between Hispanic and white students reversed. But retention rates into the second year remained at about 52 percent with Hispanic students returning at lower rates than white students. Survey and focus group data from students and faculty indicated strong support for mandating advising until students had clearly identified an education plan.

• **Increase leadership for advising.** Historically and by collective bargaining agreement, advising is the responsibility of the full-time faculty at YVCC. The nature of this responsibility is simply stated as “advising as assigned,” resulting in some faculty having many advisees while others have none. The faculty counselors were considered the leaders for advising, but had no authority to assign duties. Participation in advising was optional for students, with the majority self-advising. In order to create a more robust advising program, YVCC needed to ensure faculty and staff buy-in. The strategy employed to accomplish this was to expand leadership for advising to include more faculty, the student services leaders from related programs such as Registration and Financial Aid, and the supervising deans.

• **Increase awareness of student success data and strategies.** Through ATD and accreditation activities and publications, YVCC had been sharing data about student success and strategies for increasing success both internally and with the public, but only the administrators and key program leaders seemed to actually be mindful of data and purposeful in proposing strategies to improve student success. When the PRESS leaders returned from the kickoff, they set in motion six months of work identifying and more broadly sharing data on student success and the relationship to advising. Create a mandatory advising program and track its impact. YVCC has created a process by which all employees and students could contribute ideas about the structure the advising program should have and how to measure the impact advising has on students. The college held retreats at which a proposal was created, followed by meetings to solicit feedback, retreats to refine the proposal, and ongoing advising leader meetings to continue to support and refine the program.

• **Create a mandatory advising program and track its impact.** YVCC has created a process by which all employees and students could contribute ideas about the structure the advising program should have and how to measure the impact advising has on students. The college held retreats at which a proposal was created, followed by meetings to solicit feedback, retreats to refine the proposal, and ongoing advising leader meetings to continue to support and refine the program.

APPENDIX B (SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS)

A. An Activist History of Advising
B. Additional Case Studies
C. Scaffolding the “Whole Student”
A. LIST OF COMPETENCIES

Creating the Foundation for Alamo Colleges’ Faculty Professional Enrichment (Development) Program
VPAA Role
January 23, 2013

Work is underway to build the foundation for a faculty professional enrichment program that is based on the faculty job description and evaluation. The faculty team developing the faculty job description and evaluation system is putting together the faculty evaluation document based on the input from the colleges’ faculty that was gathered in the fall. A document should be completed in the next couple of months. As all the colleges proposed, teaching is the primary role of our faculty with a value up to 80 out of 100 percent.

As the evaluation system development progresses, we also need to start building the Faculty Professional Enrichment Program. The VPAAAs met with Jackie Claunch and Linda Boyer-Owens this week to begin an outline for the program. The group’s discussion started with listing components that are necessary in the primary role of teaching. The next discussion focused on the eight component areas in the job description and the four roles in the faculty evaluation system. A resource during the discussion was the 2012-2013 Faculty Development & Teaching/Learning Academy Catalog. The Faculty Enrichment Core Competencies framework is the group’s result.

The next step in the development process is for each vice president to discuss these with the college’s deans and chairs to gather feedback on professional enrichment topics which will be beneficial in each competency area. We know each college has enrichment activities that will fall under the competencies. However, for this step, please focus on what is needed in each of the core competencies. An example might be “understanding the community college student” or “student engagement strategies for the classroom.” This list should be completed by February 8. The VPAAAs will then review the colleges’ feedback to develop a single list. Following that step, we can identify where activities are already developed and what to create using available resources.

If you have any questions, please contact Jo-Carol Fabianke, jfabianke@alamo.edu or 485-0163.

Faculty Enrichment Core Competencies

- Quality teaching and learning strategies
- Assessment as a tool for learning
- Inclusion and diversity
- Student engagement and advising
- Professional commitment and service
The lists generated during the VPAA discussion on January 23 are provided as reference tools:

A. Brainstorm list of teaching attributes

- Active learning
- Student engagement
- Learning centered teaching strategies
- Teaching through learning
- Assessing SLOs
- Understanding our students
- Pedagogy
- Technology as a learning tool
- Diversity and inclusion
- Understanding learner unique strengths and needs
- Instructional design to achieve SLOs
- Designing learning experiences to achieve specific SLOs
- Various teaching techniques
- Human interactive skills
- Communication skills
- Create a positive atmosphere

B. Evaluation roles alignment with job description components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Role</th>
<th>Job Description Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional design</td>
<td>Promote continual improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional delivery</td>
<td>Deliver effective instruction &amp; Support learning through student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional assessment</td>
<td>Assess student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>Manage classes and learning environments &amp; Support learning through student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Provide student advisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly</td>
<td>Pursue professional development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. First listing of competencies: (used to create the final 5)

1. Recognize diversity/understanding the learner
2. Manage classes and learning environments
3. Design and deliver effective instruction
4. Assess student learning
5. Promote continual improvement teaching/learning
6. Support learning through student engagement
7. Provide student advisement
8. Professional commitment
B. 1992 FACULTY JOB DESCRIPTION

ALAMO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
TEACHING FACULTY POSITION DESCRIPTION

Teaching faculty are professional educators who have the primary responsibility of fulfilling the District mission of providing a quality education for all students attending the colleges. Faculty categories include full-time, temporary with benefits, and temporary without benefits. Full-time faculty members are classified according to the ranks of Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. Advancement in rank comes as a recognition of excellence in teaching, research, public service, and professional growth. Faculty members are responsible to a department/program chairperson. The relationship of the faculty member to the student is one of leader, teacher, advisor, and facilitator of learning.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Maintain annually-updated course syllabi and provide each student with a written statement of course requirements at the beginning of the semester including texts, course content and competencies, and evaluation.

2. Prepare course materials; use appropriate teaching techniques including delivering lectures, leading discussions, and conducting laboratory demonstrations; and perform other activities which are related to and meet the requirements of the courses.

3. Conduct evaluations of student performance and assign grades on the basis of such evaluations.

4. Maintain records of student attendance and grades according to college and State policy.

5. Maintain a posted minimum of ten office hours a week and be available for student conferences and tutoring.

6. Responsible for the development and revision of course content, textbook/equipment selection, instructional materials, and teaching assignments/scheduling.

7. Responsible for administering student surveys in classes as prescribed by district procedure and discussing results with departmental chair.

Date: January 1, 1992

Policy Reference: DDA LOCAL

Signature of Chancellor
ALAMO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

TEACHING FACULTY POSITION DESCRIPTION

8. Participate in the development and implementation of articulation programs and agreements and promote student participation in such programs.

9. Provide students with academic and career advisement and assistance in transferability as appropriate.

10. Work with students and employers in occupational settings, on-the-job training, practicums, internships, and similar work-related situations as needed.

11. Maintain professional skills and subject expertise through continual study and research in discipline and through involvement in professional organizations.

12. Donate academic expertise in the local, state or national community when appropriate to fulfill the community relations goals of the District.

13. Serve on department, college, and district committees as needed to assist in policy development, promotion or tenure review, and other matters to benefit the District.
ALAMO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

FACULTY EVALUATION by CHAIRPERSON

Name: ____________________________
Department: ______________________
Rank: ____________________________ Tenure: Yes No
SAC ___________ SPC ___________ PAC

Evaluation Period From ________ To _________
SSN: ____________________________
Date of Employment: _________________
Dept. chairperson: __________________

GENERAL STATEMENT

The purposes of the performance evaluation are (1) to provide information to individual faculty members concerning job performance, thus contributing to professional growth and development and (2) to provide information for use in recommendations concerning other institutional personnel actions. Desirable outcomes of the evaluation process include improved instruction, enhanced communication, creation of an atmosphere wherein faculty development can be readily realized and assessed and enhancement of the quality of faculty performance as related to the overall mission of the Alamo Community College District. This summary will be used by the department chairperson or the chairperson's designee.

The evaluation is considered a joint venture and must be approached with the objective of fairness and mutual growth of all concerned. Essential elements are objectivity, respect for academic freedom, and a focus on job requirements as the basis for evaluation. Professional philosophical and/or personal differences should not determine judgments; nor should a single action or occurrence, whether favorable or unfavorable, provide the sole basis for an assessment. Rather, consistency and overall performance should be given due consideration. Documentation must be available to support assessments which are extremely favorable or unfavorable. While all categories might not be weighted equally, the collective ratings for the individual categories should form the basis for the overall evaluation of the faculty member.

Prior to the evaluation conference, both the faculty member and the department chairperson should review the position description. Following complete, fair and open discussion of the evaluation, the faculty member should be given ample time to respond. Space for written comments is provided.

REVIEW OF POSITION DESCRIPTION

Have faculty member and chairperson reviewed position description? __yes__ __no__

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

5 OUTSTANDING: performs very well; a model for other instructors;
4 VERY GOOD: performs well; demonstrates above average performance;
3 SATISFACTORY: performs in middle range; demonstrates average performance;
2 MARGINAL: demonstrates minimally acceptable performance; some changes should be made to improve instruction;
1 UNSATISFACTORY: does not meet minimum requirements; major changes must be made to improve instruction;
0 NOT APPLICABLE: not able to observe/not relevant.

PLEASE WRITE AN EVALUATION IN EACH CATEGORY INDIKATING ONE OF THE PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS NOTED ABOVE.

IMPORTANT FACTORS/COMPETENCIES

PERFORMANCE

TEACHING:

QUALITY OF TEACHING:

2. A) Provides students with written course requirements and clear assignments. B) Tutors students on individual or small group basis. C) Conducts evaluations of student performance and assigns grades on the basis of such evaluations.

ADVISING

3. A) Assists students with academic and/or career advisement. B) Is available for student conferences.

4. Works with student and employers in occupational settings, on-the-job training, practicums, internships, and similar work-related situations as needed.

5 4 3 2 1 0
ENGAGING FACULTY AND STAFF IN THE STUDENT SUCCESS AGENDA

MANAGEMENT
5. A) Maintains records of student attendance and grades according to college and State policies.
   B) Fulfills departmental requirements for data and records in a timely manner.

STUDENT SURVEYS
6. A) Has student surveys administered in his/her classes as indicated by district policy.
   B) Discusses results with departmental chair.

SERVICE
7. A) Participates in development of course content and selection of textbooks, equipment and instructional materials.
   B) Fulfills all departmental duties and responsibilities in a timely manner.

8. Serves on department, college and district committees as needed to assist in policy development, promotion or tenure review and other matters to benefit the district.

9. Donates academic expertise in local, state or national community.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH (Refer to Annual Report: Faculty Evaluation)
10. Maintains knowledge and skills through study and research in discipline and through involvement in professional organizations.

OVERALL APPRAISAL
COMMENTS BY DEPARTMENTAL CHAIRPERSON OR DESIGNEE

Is the faculty member making satisfactory progress toward:
Promotion _Yes__ _No__ _NA__
Tenure _Yes__ _No__ _NA__

Sources of Information for Evaluation:
Self-Evaluation _Student Evaluation _Peer Evaluation
OTHER (Specify)

Comments by Faculty Member:
_I concur with this evaluation._ _I do not concur with this evaluation._

SIGNATURES
I certify that I have read and discussed this evaluation with this instructor.

EVALUATOR ___________________________ Date ___________________________

I certify that I have read and discussed this evaluation with the evaluator.

Faculty Member ___________________________ Date ___________________________

REVIEWED BY:

Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Original to District Personnel Office: copies to faculty member and department chairperson
D. NEW FULL-TIME TEACHING JOB DESCRIPTION

Alamo Colleges

Full-Time Teaching Faculty Job Description

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

Full-time members of the faculty are professional educators who have the primary responsibility of fulfilling the Alamo Colleges’ mission, vision, values, and goal of providing a quality education for all students attending the colleges. Faculty members are classified according to the ranks of Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. Faculty members are protected by academic freedom and bound by its accompanying responsibilities. They are responsible to a College President, Chancellor, and Board of Trustees through the chain of command and accountable to the Board’s policies and administrative procedures. The relationship of the faculty member to the student is one of leader, teacher, adviser, and facilitator of learning.

Faculty job descriptions are defined for Full-Time Teaching Faculty, Adjunct Teaching Faculty, Librarian Faculty, and Counselor Faculty. Faculty Chairpersons have a separate job description.

FACULTY POSITION CRITERIA

A faculty position must meet the following criteria:

1. A regular, full-time position.

2. A position wherein the primary functions performed are those of teaching assigned credit courses on a regular basis.

3. A position which requires certain minimum academic qualifications according to Alamo Colleges’ Procedure D.2.3.2.

DUTIES

The cyclical nature of teaching and learning forms the basis of duties for Alamo Colleges’ faculty. In order to strive for continual improvement of student success, faculty members must plan an optimal learning environment; provide high quality instruction and advising; assess themselves, their students, and their teaching techniques in order to increase effectiveness; continue their own professional development; and participate in the shared governance process to ensure policies and procedures remain focused on maintaining high standards while providing appropriate support for student needs.

Manage classes and learning environments:

a. Maintain attendance records, submit grades, and provide constructive feedback as well as other relevant information to students throughout the semester. Create and maintain accurate syllabi that incorporate departmental, college, cross-college, and instructor requirements.
b. Participate in the selection of appropriate materials to support academic departments’
course curriculum in accordance with the Alamo Colleges’ Guidelines for Selection of
Instructional Materials.

c. Work with students and employers in occupational settings as required by or appropriate to
the academic discipline.

d. Conduct classes punctually and in accordance with the prescribed meeting schedule.

Deliver effective instruction:

a. Assume primary responsibility for and exercise oversight of the curriculum in conjunction
with the Board of Trustees’ policies, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of
instruction.

b. Consider individual differences of students in order to design and support a range of
appropriate learning activities.

c. Use technology in a manner appropriate to the nature and objectives of courses and
programs and communicate clearly to students the expectations concerning the use of such
technology.

d. Use a variety of techniques to assess student learning as applicable by academic discipline
and specific course.

e. Integrate concrete, real-life situations into learning experiences to encourage critical
thinking, interdisciplinary skills, and teamwork.

f. Employ methods that develop student understanding of discipline-specific thinking,
practices, and procedures, as well as interdisciplinary applications, to create academic
literacy.

Assess student learning:

a. Collaborate with colleagues both across colleges and within individual departments in the
construction and continuous improvement of measurable learning outcomes to include the
THECB core curriculum objectives and additional Alamo Colleges’ objectives.

b. Design assessments that measure or demonstrate student growth.

c. Sequence learning opportunities throughout advising, courses, and programs to build
student understanding and knowledge.

d. Align assessment with learning opportunities.

Promote continual improvement as part of the cycle of teaching and learning:

a. Develop and revise curriculum and instructional materials as needed.

b. Use department-designated learning outcomes to plan, develop, and document the
effectiveness of teaching activities.

c. Complete all mandatory performance evaluation measures within specified time limits.

d. Share best practices with colleagues in formal or informal settings.

e. Participate in instructional, departmental, or institutional research to improve educational
effectiveness.
f. Support the online student survey process.
g. Evaluate teaching and assessment practices to continue improving them.

**Support learning through student engagement:**

a. Create a positive classroom atmosphere that encourages active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student and faculty interaction, and support for learners.
b. Be available to students during posted office hours.
c. Use technology to assist in communication with students.
d. Encourage a sense of community among students for learning both inside and outside the classroom.

**Provide student advisement:**

a. Help students develop academic habits for college success by reinforcing the Student Success Policy and Procedures and the Student Responsibility for Success Policy.
b. Advise students about program, career, or transfer options to help them make informed academic decisions leading to degree or certificate completion.
c. Make students aware of and refer them to the appropriate student and academic support services available at their colleges or elsewhere in the district.

**Pursue professional development:**

a. Stay current in academic fields, e.g., by belonging to professional societies, reading discipline-specific journals, studying pedagogy, attending conferences, or making presentations.
b. Maintain required professional credentials, licensing, and continuing education hours as disciplinary standards dictate.
c. Engage in professional education which enhances both disciplinary and pedagogical/andragogical knowledge, e.g., by taking graduate courses or internal classes offered through college or district professional development organizations.
d. Contribute to one’s academic discipline through research and publication or other endeavors as appropriate.

**Participate collegially in department, college, cross-college, discipline-specific, district, and community service activities:**

a. Serve on and play an active role in department, college, cross-college, discipline-specific, and/or district committees.
b. Participate in service through appropriate discipline-specific organizations, educational organizations, statewide boards/committees or community activities.
c. Assist in policy development and other governance matters within one’s discipline, department, college, or at district level or across the colleges.
E. NEW EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

ALAMO COLLEGES FACULTY EVALUATION
2013-2014 Academic Year Pilot Model

**Purpose:** The Alamo Colleges Faculty Evaluation System is intended to support faculty in demonstrating and achieving teaching excellence, professional growth and service. The evaluation system provides Alamo Colleges with a means to demonstrate that teaching is a priority and to support the development and enrichment of the teaching profession. The system is intended to allow faculty to build an electronic portfolio that can be used for evaluation, professional growth, promotion and tenure purposes.

**Alignment with Alamo Colleges Vision:** Achieving the Alamo College Vision (to be the best in the nation at student success and performance excellence) requires a focus on the quality of teaching and learning. The Faculty Evaluation System is designed to support student success and performance excellence by engaging each faculty member in an assessment process that serves both to highlight areas of excellence and to identify opportunities for development as teachers. The faculty development system goes hand in hand with the evaluation system to create opportunities for individualized development to enhance teaching and learning.

**Categories of the Faculty Evaluation System:** The Alamo Colleges Faculty Evaluation System is comprised of three major categories (and a fourth optional category), that represent the various faculty roles.

The categories, as pictured in Chart A below, are:

1. Teaching with the highest evaluation weighting of 50 to 85%
2. Scholarly and Creativity Activities with a weighting of 5 to 40%
3. Service with a weighting of 10 to 40%
4. Administration with a weighting of 0 to 30%.

The percentage is to be representative of your focus in your faculty role—not the amount of time spent in each area.
Each evaluation category or role is sub-divided into the major components of the role. Chart B lists the components of the teaching role, the scholarly/creative role and the service role. The Administrative Role is applicable if you serve as a program coordinator or have another role in academic leadership (e.g., faculty senate chair, responsibility for department scheduling, oversight of adjunct faculty).

Chart A: Categories of the Evaluation System
Chart B: Roles with Components

Component Definitions:

Section I: Teaching Role

- Instructional Design - the practice of maximizing the effectiveness, efficiency and appeal of instruction and other learning experiences; the analysis of learning needs and systematic development of instruction.

- Instructional Delivery – the act of imparting knowledge and skills; the strategies employed to develop student knowledge, skills and understanding incorporating student engagement.

- Instructional Assessment - the systematic collection, review, and use of information about student learning for the purpose of measuring and improving student learning and development.

- Class/Course Management – the organization, control, and structuring of a class, including creating the climate of a class, handling logistics and required reporting, etc.

Section II: Scholarly/Creative Role

- Professional Development – learning activities that contribute to enhancing the knowledge and understanding of one’s discipline and/or the teaching profession.
• Discovery/Creation – activities/projects that contribute to the knowledge base in one’s field (teaching discipline or teaching practice)

• Dissemination – the formal transmission/sharing of information about one’s field of expertise.

Section III: Service Role

• Service to Institution – engagement in activities that contribute to the College/District in accomplishing its mission, vision and strategic plan, including service to students outside the classroom.

• Service to the Profession – engagement in activities that contribute to the teaching profession or to one’s field of study.

• Service to General Community – voluntary engagement in the application of one’s area of expertise to benefit the general community.

Section IV: Administrative Role—Engagement beyond the normal teaching responsibilities in administrative duties that compose a significant portion of one’s load in the college.

Instructions

You are participating in the 2013-2014 Faculty Evaluation Program, along with approximately 50 other faculty, to assist in testing the program. Twice during the year, you will be asked to provide feedback on your experience with the program and electronic documentation of the evaluation.

The Professional Activities Report provides a structured format for assembling the evidence on which the annual professional performance evaluation will be based. Faculty will gather the evidence for required and optional roles. Other individuals (such as peers, Department chair, etc.) may be asked to provide ratings on various aspects of the evaluation. The documentation will be gathered in a portfolio. When complete, the portfolio will be transferred to AlamoLearn.

Each faculty member, in consultation with the department chair, will identify the most appropriate role from the five sets on the instruction sheet. These are provided for 2013-2014 and the role weights will be evaluated at the end of the year.

Response to Previous Performance Review Recommendations. (This portion of the evaluation document will not be used for the 2013-2014 test participation.) List any specific performance enhancement recommendations that were made at the end of the last faculty evaluation period. For each recommendation describe in detail how you responded to and/or implemented the recommendations. Provide examples of any documents, activities, and/or products that illustrate your response.

• Describe the activities and their outcomes that served to accomplish the goals you developed at the end of the last evaluation period.

• Assess your progress towards meeting the goals you developed at the end of the last evaluation period.
• Describe the goals you intend to accomplish during the next year that would enhance your own professional growth and/or support the College in the achievement of its mission and/or enhance your teaching skill and effectiveness.

Section I: TEACHING
This checklist is provided to assist in assembling the material to be used in the evaluation of TEACHING performance.

E = Exemplary Performance – Meets all Requirements PLUS at least two Optional Activities
P = Proficient Performance – Meets All Requirements
I = Improvement Required – Did not meet ONE Requirement
U = Unacceptable Performance – Did not meet TWO or MORE Requirements

Instructional Design [components in faculty job description]
Consider individual differences of students in order to design and support a range of appropriate learning activities. Integrate concrete, real-life situations into learning experiences to encourage critical thinking, interdisciplinary skills, and teamwork. Employ methods that develop student understanding of discipline-specific thinking, practices, and procedures, as well as interdisciplinary applications to create academic literacy. Develop and revise curriculum and instructional materials as needed. Create a positive classroom atmosphere that encourage active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student and faculty interaction and support for learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Activities/Characteristics</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearly present expected student learning outcomes</td>
<td>Course syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide appropriate syllabi and course outline</td>
<td>eSyllabus, syllabus, course calendar, observation from supervisor or peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide learning materials that support student learning outcomes</td>
<td>Handouts, on-line resources, course notes, examples or links to materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use current content and lesson plans to achieve student learning outcomes.</td>
<td>Handouts, articles specific to content, examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used active learning strategies to optimize learning.</td>
<td>Provide sample assignment, syllabus, observation from supervisor or peer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optional Activities/Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage, individually or as a team member creating and developing a program, a new course or an interdisciplinary learning community or a significant course redesign as needed to address College/Program/Discipline goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate service learning or study abroad opportunity into curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate variety of relevant activities (e.g., guest speakers, video, field experiences, case studies, co-curricular activities).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate use of technology (e.g. LMS, discussion boards) to support learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require use of academic support resources (e.g., tutoring, library services, labs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop strategies that use authentic materials, activities, interests, issues and needs from learners’ lives to contextualize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Instructional Delivery** [components in faculty job description]

*Employ methods that develop student understanding of discipline-specific thinking, practices, and procedures, as well as interdisciplinary applications, to create academic literacy. Encourage a sense of community among students for learning both inside and outside the classroom. Use technology in a manner appropriate to the nature and objectives of courses and programs and communicate clearly to students the expectations concerning the use of such technology.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a learning environment that</td>
<td>class observation, student evaluations, group projects, student presentations, student learning outcome assessments, success rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages students in active learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates high expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages cooperation among students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates respect for diverse talents and ways of knowing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively deliver concepts to achieve course student learning outcomes for the course and program.</td>
<td>Student evaluations, student/class observation, student learning outcome assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop delivery methods, including the effective use of technology, that improve student learning outcomes and skill levels.</td>
<td>Group projects, relevant community projects, student presentations, homework, PGR (must be used in conjunction with other student learning outcomes data, examples of assignments/activities, student learning outcome assessment results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optional Activities/Characteristics</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultivate progressively higher level critical thinking skills in learners.</td>
<td>Homework, cumulative lesson plans, sample of assignments, student survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply educational technology in ways that enhance the learning experience.</td>
<td>Class assignment, course notes, student survey, links to online activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate course content and student learning outcomes to areas beyond the classroom to contextualize learning.</td>
<td>Syllabus, class assignment, provide copy of assignment, write-up of assignment/student evaluation, activities/assignments and learning results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructional Assessment** [components in faculty job description]

*Use a variety of techniques to assess student learning as applicable by academic discipline and specific course. Design assessments that measure or demonstrate student growth. Align assessment with learning opportunities. Provide constructive feedback as well as other relevant information to students throughout the semester.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create and administer assessments that effectively evaluate student progress toward achieving student learning outcomes; analyze results, identify opportunities for improvement, and implement improvement strategies.</td>
<td>Sample of assessment used &amp; relationship to SLO, SLOs, class assignment &amp; exams, dept./college evaluations, examples of improvements/results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided continuing, meaningful feedback to students.</td>
<td>Sample documents given to students, student conferences, student evaluations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combine high expectations with student support systems.</td>
<td>Syllabus/classroom observation, student survey, chair/peer review, student learning outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assessment results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained academic integrity standards</td>
<td>Syllabus, process used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Optional Activities/Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create practice and self-evaluation opportunities for students.</td>
<td>Syllabi, peer review, samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate with peers in creating and administering team assessments (i.e. writing assignments).</td>
<td>Evaluation by peers, sample assessment project and results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required essays, reports, technical documents and other written assignments to assess critical thinking skills.</td>
<td>Provide assignment instruction, example of assignment, syllabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employ assessment strategies such as student peer review, individual or group conferences for feedback, pre- and post-instruction assessments, electronic feedback.</td>
<td>Syllabi, observation, sample assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support student portfolio development</td>
<td>Examples/syllabus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Class/Course Management** [components in faculty job description]

*Maintain attendance records, submit grades, and provide constructive feedback as well as other relevant information to students throughout the semester. Create and maintain accurate syllabi that incorporate departmental, college, cross-college, and instructor requirements. Conduct classes punctually and in accordance with the prescribed meeting schedule. Support the online student survey process. Be available to students during posted office hours. Work with students and employers in occupational settings as required by or appropriate to the academic discipline.*

**Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain class records (e.g., grades, online syllabus).</td>
<td>Provide syllabi samples, Gradebook, chair eval &amp; feedback, reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Smart Start guidelines.</td>
<td>Example of submitted report, chair eval &amp; feedback, records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Early Alert notifications as appropriate and meet grade posting deadlines.</td>
<td>E-records, provide copies, example of Early Alert, chair eval &amp; feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post and maintain office hours.</td>
<td>Submitted to Dept. Chair, posted on Canvas, syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodate special needs students.</td>
<td>Syllabus, DSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide timely, consistent feedback on progress in course.</td>
<td>Mid-term grades/Final, student evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Student Survey of Instruction and identify ways to maximize student participation</td>
<td>Strategies/tools used; return results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use LMS and/or other technology to post syllabi, handouts and other teaching aids.</td>
<td>Canvas link, e-syllabi, student eval, links, Canvas certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Optional Activities/Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide review sessions for students</td>
<td>Syllabus, posted example, student eval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranged for and coordinated guest lecturers or other outside activities</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, student eval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with professionals in area to develop internships for students</td>
<td>Internship agreement, employer feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in collegial interaction with students in and out of classroom.</td>
<td>Student evaluations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section II: SCHOLARLY & CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

This checklist is provided to assist in assembling the material to be used in the evaluation of SCHOLARLY & CREATIVE activities.

**E** = Exemplary Performance – Meets all Requirements PLUS at least two Optional Activities

**P** = Proficient Performance – Meets All Requirements

**I** = Improvement Required – Did not meet ONE Requirement

**U** = Unacceptable Performance – Did not meet TWO or MORE Requirements

---

Professional Development [components in faculty job description]

Evaluate teaching and assessment practices to continue improving them. Stay current in academic fields, e.g., by belonging to professional societies, reading discipline-specific journals, studying pedagogy, attending conferences, or making presentations. Maintain required professional credentials, licensing, and continuing education hours as disciplinary standards dictate. Engage in professional education which enhances both disciplinary and pedagogical/andragogical knowledge, e.g., by taking graduate courses or internal classes offered through college or district professional development organizations.

### Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate in at least three professional growth and development programs.</td>
<td>Professional leave documents, AlamoLearn Transcript. Other documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain active membership and participation in at least one professional organization related to teaching or one’s scholarly interests.</td>
<td>Provide certificate of membership, evidence of membership, self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in peer evaluation in a class (required or optional?)</td>
<td>Provide copy of peer eval, reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete required online tutorials such as Ethics and Sexual Harassment</td>
<td>Provide certificate copy, AlamoLearn, reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Optional Activities/Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate in more than three professional development programs.</td>
<td>Transcript or other documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain active membership and participation in more than one professional organization related to teaching or one’s scholarly interests.</td>
<td>Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue an advanced degree.</td>
<td>Grad approval forms, transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain specialty certification relevant to discipline or teaching.</td>
<td>Evidence of completion, transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in an internship or fellowship.</td>
<td>Evidence of completion, transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend conference/workshop sponsored by a professional organization.</td>
<td>Travel paperwork, self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain continuing education credentials through a professional organization.</td>
<td>Documentation, self-evaluation &amp; reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Discovery/Creative Activities  [components in faculty job description]
*Participate in instructional, departmental, or institutional research to improve educational effectiveness. Contribute to one’s academic discipline through research and publication or other endeavors as appropriate.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td><strong>Optional Activities/Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted research appropriate to the faculty member’s Base Profession (content expertise) or their Meta-Profession (teaching) for the purpose of advancing the discipline and/or improving teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Conference presentation, articles written, improved learning/student success results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Pursue creative (artistic) artifacts reflecting new styles of expression, usually in literature or the arts; bring new learning to the classroom.</td>
<td>Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete IRB training.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write and submit grant proposals.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design research proposals.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate with other scholars.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze data and use to improve teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct reviews of the literature or obtaining information from archives.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop open source materials for a course.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make presentation at a conference/workshop sponsored by professional organization.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create works of artistic merit as appropriate to discipline, e.g., art pieces, music, poetry.</td>
<td>Appropriate documentation, Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dissemination  [components in faculty job description]
*Share best practices with colleagues in formal or informal settings.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td><strong>Optional Activities/Characteristics</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Accomplish at least one of the following*:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Publication of book, book chapter, monograph, manual, or refereed journal article</td>
<td>Self-reporting product and/or document</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Presented a keynote address, invited address, paper, poster, workshop, seminar, etc.</td>
<td>Self-reporting product and/or document</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presented an artistic exhibition, performance, display or new artistic interpretation of previous works in one’s own field</td>
<td>Self-reporting product and/or document</td>
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*Note: To count, activities must be new or moved to a new venue (e.g., a poster being transformed into a journal article). Giving the same presentation multiple times, for example, counts as one activity.*
Engage in one of the following endeavors

- Write articles for the popular press
- Give media interviews
- Produce educational TV or radio series
- Serve as a journal or newsletter editor
- Serve as a reviewer for a journal, newsletter, national conference or a colleagues’ appointment status
- Make presentation to high schools
- Copy edit and/or contribute to college publication

Self-reporting product and/or document

Lead a session at Employee Development Day or other internal institute

Self-reporting product and/or document

Section III: SERVICE

This checklist is provided to assist in assembling the material to be used in the evaluation of SERVICE activities.

| E | Exemplary Performance – Meets all Requirements PLUS at least two Optional Activities |
| P | Proficient Performance – Meets All Requirements |
| I | Improvement Required – Did not meet ONE Requirement |
| U | Unacceptable Performance – Did not meet TWO or MORE Requirements |

Service to the Institution (College/Alamo Colleges/students outside the classroom) [components in faculty job description]

Serve on and play an active, collegial role in department, college, cross-college, discipline-specific, and/or district committees. Assist in policy development and other governance matters within one’s discipline, department, college, or at district level or across the colleges. Assume primary responsibility for and exercise oversight of the curriculum in alignment with the Board of Trustees’ policies, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction. Collaborate with colleagues both across colleges and within individual departments in the construction and continuous improvement of measurable student learning outcomes to include the THECB core curriculum objectives and additional Alamo Colleges’ objectives. Participate in the selection of appropriate materials to support academic departments’ course curriculum in accordance with the Alamo colleges’ Guidelines for Selection of Instructional Materials. Sequence learning opportunities throughout advising, courses, and programs to build student understanding and knowledge. Collaboratively develop and revise curriculum and instructional materials as needed. Participate in instructional, departmental, or institutional research to improve educational effectiveness. Help students develop academic habits for college success by reinforcing the Student Success Policy and Procedures and the Student Responsibility for Student Policy. Advise and mentor students about program, career or transfer options to help them make informed academic decisions leading to degree or certificate completion. Make students aware of and refer them to the appropriate student and academic support services available at their colleges or elsewhere in the district.

✔ Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist | Evidence Examples

| Actively participate in at least one college committee. | Minutes, self-evaluation |
| Prepare for, attend, and productively participate in Department meetings. | Examples of contributions |
| Prepared for, attend, and participate in faculty meetings. | Include evidence in dossier |
| Participated in at least two student-oriented campus activities such as plays, convocations, or presentations, College concerts or student sports events, student orientations. | Reports |
| Mentor faculty (full and/or part time) in accordance with college guidelines and program expectations. | Self-evaluation, results |
| Conduct academic advising, with emphasis on student completion of a specific academic/career pathway. | Self-evaluation, results, including logs of students advised, student degree plans completed |

**Optional Activities/Characteristics**

| Participate in more than one college or cross college committee. | Self-evaluation, results of committee work, specific contributions to committee outcomes |
| Participate in more than two student-oriented campus activities. | Self-evaluation; list of events and activities |
| Advise or supervise a student club/organization. | Self-evaluation, examples of guidance to the student organization |
| Manage student projects. | Self-evaluation of student projects/results |
| Serve as a mentor to students or provide leadership for advising students. | Self-evaluation; examples and results |
| Participate in community outreach activities on behalf of the College, e.g., job fairs, history fairs. | Self-evaluation, log of participation |
| Represent college on cross-college discipline or program team. | Self-evaluation, outcomes of team’s work and contributions to the outcomes |
| Receive and or lead a grant for the College. | Self-evaluation, grant award or outcomes |
| Serve as manager for department’s web pages. | Sample web pages; examples of improvements |
| Collaborate on behalf of the Alamo Colleges in developing articulation agreement with four-year college or university. | Approved/signed agreement |
| Lead review/analysis of course/discipline/program SLOs. | Defined outcomes measures, targets, assessments, results, opportunities for improvements, cycles of assessment and improvement |
| Conducted a peer review for a colleague. | Examples of feedback, assistance given |

**Service to the Profession** [components in faculty job description]

Participate in service through appropriate discipline-specific organizations, educational organizations, statewide boards/committees or community activities.

| Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist | Evidence Examples |
| Optional Activities/Characteristics | |
| Belong to at least one professional organization representing one’s base profession or meta-profession. (duplicate) | Appropriate documentation, self-report & membership list |
| Serve as officer of professional organization. | |
| Served as a committee member or officer of a professional organization, or as an organizational representative. | Appropriate documentation, self-report & membership list |
| Voluntarily used one’s expertise in service to | Appropriate documentation, self-report & |
the community. membership list

Publish or contribute to an article, book, or digital document/presentation (to include web publication, digital textbooks, videos, podcasts, etc.). Appropriate documentation, self-report & membership list

Participate in state policy-making boards and advisory committees. Appropriate documentation, self-report & membership list

### Service to the General Community  [components in faculty job description]
*Participate in service through appropriate community activities.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓ Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Optional Activities/Characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serve on a committee/board in community organization that utilizes expertise.</td>
<td>Documentation of activities and contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer for community service that is specific to one’s discipline or teaching profession.</td>
<td>Documentation of activities and contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as a guest lecturer or provide a professional demonstration for community.</td>
<td>Documentation activity/contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve on boards that are directly related to one’s discipline or educational expertise.</td>
<td>Documentation of activities and contributions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Section IV: ADMINISTRATION
This checklist is provided to assist in assembling the material to be used in the evaluation of ADMINISTRATION activities.

- **E** = Exemplary Performance – Meets all Requirements PLUS at least two Optional Activities
- **P** = Proficient Performance – Meets All Requirements
- **I** = Improvement Required – Did not meet ONE Requirement
- **U** = Unacceptable Performance – Did not meet TWO or MORE Requirements

### Administrative Expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓ Required Activities/Characteristics Checklist</th>
<th>Evidence Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Optional Activities/Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide administrative assistance to department; e.g., scheduling.</td>
<td>Documentation, stipend/released time, results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire part-time faculty.</td>
<td>Documentation from Chair, stipend/released time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as lead instructor for discipline or program.</td>
<td>Documentation from Chair, stipend/released time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve in administrative capacity in academic area.</td>
<td>Stipend/released time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor progress of accreditation requirements.</td>
<td>Stipend/release time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assume responsibility for equipment maintenance and purchase.</td>
<td>Stipend/release time</td>
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Section V: Response to Previous Performance Review & Professional Enrichment Plan for Next Academic Year

Note: This section will not be completed during 2013-2014.

The primary purpose of the Alamo Colleges’ Faculty Evaluation System is to provide meaningful feedback to faculty concerning their professional performance so as to assist in the pursuit of their commitment to continuous improvement. In this section faculty are to indicate the result of their continuous professional develop activities as developed during the previous academic year evaluation cycle. In addition, each faculty member, in consultation with the department chair, is to develop the continuing professional enrichment plan for the next academic year.

In this section the following are to be inserted as part of this Professional Activities Record:

PART 1: A copy of the Professional Development/Enrichment Plan developed by you and the Department Chair as part of the previous academic year evaluation cycle.

PART 2: A point-by-point response to the recommendations and actions agreed upon in the Professional Development/Enrichment Plan. This response should include a description of the actions taken by you in pursuing the Professional Enrichment Plan and any evidence concerning the outcomes of your response to the Plan.

PART 3: A copy of the Professional Development/Enrichment Plan developed by you and your department chair specifying the actions and activities you intend to take as part of your Continuous Improvement effort in enhancing your Teaching or other professional skills and knowledge.
A. AN ACTIVIST HISTORY OF ADVISING

Wilma Dulin
Tenured Faculty, PRESS, Achieving the Dream, and Title V Coordinator
Yakima campus

Wilma Dulin is a 25-year veteran of the YVCC faculty, one of a few faculty members with teaching and program coordinating experience in all divisions of the college. Because of her wide range of experiences and co-leadership of Achieving the Dream’s Core and Data Teams, she was in position to identify areas of focus to deepen engagement with student success when the Walmart Foundation PRESS grant opportunity arose. After batting about several ideas with YVCC administrators, Dulin authored the PRESS grant with a focus on expanding advising “beyond the front door of the college” and viewing advising as a collaborative effort between faculty – full and part time – and student services staff members.

“It is time that we recognized that advising isn’t simply something done by full-time faculty or something students do when they are in trouble,” Dulin said. “Advising isn’t just about picking classes or clarifying a major. It is a relationship with the college. Advising is about helping students to use the tools and processes of the college efficiently and effectively to figure out how to bridge from where they are to where they want to be. “It takes all of us to successfully advise students,” she added. “We need to engage all sectors of the college in understanding the processes of the college. Figuring out how to support students is essential to increasing their success and, therefore, our success as a college.

“Given our largely first-generation, often-impoverished student body,” Dulin concluded, “we need to take more responsibility for guiding them and supporting their academic achievement.”

BACKGROUND
When YVCC became involved with Achieving the Dream in 2006, Dulin was tapped to attend the Kickoff Institute and then to co-lead the Core and Data teams. A long-time student advocate, Dulin had been leading student-success initiatives and writing grants in a number of different areas, and was one of a handful of people on campus who researched academic strategies for improving student success. Under Dulin’s ATD leadership, YVCC developed the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and then charged the fledgling OIE with developing consistent methodologies for mining, analyzing, sharing, and reporting data for the college. As a Core Team co-leader of the Core Team, Dulin supported implementation of three primary foci: (1) developing the research function of the college; (2) improving the first-year experience; and (3) improving success in developmental mathematics. Dulin also attended the 2007 NACADA Summer Institute with 16 others to focus advising on entering student success. From then on, she participated in multiple aspects of supporting the success of new students, including serving as an advisor for new student orientation, working with TRIO students, defining placement practices, ending late registration, and tracking student retention and perceptions of support based on types of services provided.
Dulin, the OIE, and like-minded faculty, administrators and staff began to establish a “culture of evidence” at the college to help track institutional efforts to boost student success and retention. Between 2006 and 2012, for example, student retention from fall quarter to winter quarter increased to more than 80 percent, with all groups persisting at comparable rates and no gaps in achievement. However, persistence from the first year to the second year of enrollment remained stagnant at about 55 percent and completion rates were virtually unaffected. More than 90 percent of students reported that they felt supported by the college’s faculty and staff, but when this was dissected, it became clear that students were not using advising services and they were confused about financial aid and other support services. Faculty also reported frustration with advising practices—a long-time institutional point of contention and confusion—and supported efforts to make advising mandatory.

In the spring of 2012, therefore, Dulin authored YVCC’s PRESS grant application, which focused on building from the ATD-sponsored entering student advising activities to develop a mandatory advising program. The PRESS grant emphasized developing a plan for “broad engagement” and, given that advising spans the campus services, the college chose to focus on “advising” as a vehicle for increasing engagement around student success. While all full-time faculty members were identified as advisors, in reality the majority of advising for entering and transfer-intending students was provided by the six faculty counselors and selected faculty members who specialized in preparing for transfer in sciences. Faculty members from professional technical programs were much more involved with advising students, but such advising was limited to students in their respective programs of study or in their individual courses. If students presented their faculty advisors with problems outside of their registration questions, they were usually referred to the counseling and advising center where they were assisted by the faculty counselors. Student services staff members were not allowed to “advise,” and their role in supporting student success was downplayed.

THE PRESS KICKOFF AND START-UP AT YVCC

In June 2012, YVCC sent a team of four faculty members, one faculty counselor, and one administrator to Washington D.C. for the PRESS kickoff. None of the individuals on the team were familiar with the PRESS application and few had been involved with ATD efforts. There was considerable confusion during the kickoff event and thereafter, however, because the team went focused on improving advising while the PRESS grant focused on improving engagement. Upon returning to Yakima, the PRESS team convened a meeting with the original NACADA group and others involved with advising to strategize how to proceed. This larger group dispersed into six groups tasked with identifying advising related concerns: faculty, staff, students, technology services, data, and website. A PRESS team faculty member served as the leader for each group, convening the groups, keeping notes, and participating in leadership meetings. Each group worked independently. The faculty group then designed focus group protocols for a fall meeting. The staff group held focus groups with staff members from many different areas of the campus and created survey questions for staff members. The student group identified data from student surveys and met with student groups to discuss advising concerns. The technology services group focused on methods for tracking advising and creating web-based advising tools. The data group reviewed student success data and attempted to identify options for collecting future data on advising and student success. The website group focused on discovering how students accessed information about the college.

In November 2012, YVCC held the PRESS kickoff in conjunction with the Assessment Workday. During the morning, the PRESS team shared information about the grant and what they had learned in their task group investigations to date, inviting additional questions or concerns to emerge. The faculty was then divided into groups to participate in focus groups about advising models, academic early warning, and student evaluation of instruction. Counselors facilitated the groups, kept notes, and gathered together after the sessions were
completed to compile their notes into a single document. The November, 2012, session was the first time part-time/adjunct faculty had been invited to participate, and while only a handful attended, their feedback was insightful, indicating that adjunct faculty were being asked many advising questions and had no idea how to respond. (See Amber Richards’ case study.) Overall, 97 percent of the full-time faculty members participated in the kickoff and focus groups, responding that they wanted a mandatory advising program for students until they were well on their way to success and that they wanted more training about advising and advising tools.

A NEW ADVISING MODEL AND INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

Vice President of Instruction and Student Services Tomas Ybarra then asked Dulin to facilitate a group of faculty and staff in drafting a model for mandatory advising over the winter break 2012-2013 and to have a model ready for feedback in January 2013. To support this process, Dulin conducted a literature review on advising models, created a summary document for faculty that included links to research articles, program descriptions, and other college websites, and worked with Sheila Delquadri, OIE research analyst, on developing a presentation on the types of student success data YVCC was collecting and the trends that were being noted. Twenty individuals were invited to participate on the Advising Redesign Team, including the PRESS leaders; ultimately, sixteen individuals participated. Dulin provided participants with reading materials and questions to ponder in preparation for the Advising Redesign Retreat, and set up the retreat to begin with sharing information gleaned to date and then moving into planning.

On December 13-14, 2012, nine full-time faculty members representing all distribution areas of the transfer degree and primary professional-technical programs, three counselors, and four administrative exempt staff discussed data, reviewed literature, identified supporting technology, and discussed the concerns of their respective groups related to advising. After two intense days, the Advising Redesign Team proposed an advising program structured around six general pathways: arts/humanities, business, healthcare, STEM, social services, and exploratory (undecided). According to the plan, the full-time faculty would be divided among the pathways, with all professional-technical faculty members related to a pathway advising for that pathway along with faculty members from all distribution areas of the transfer degree and specific related transfer majors. Entering students would be directed to a pathway for New Student Orientation based on their stated intention and would then be assigned a specific advisor based on their area of interest. All students would be required to meet with an academic advisor to obtain a registration code until they had successfully completed 30 college-level credits. Team members were charged with sharing the plan with their respective groups, gathering feedback and reconvening in late January to share what was learned and move forward with planning for implementation in fall 2013.

‘WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO US?’

The introduction of the draft advising plan succeeded at increasing engagement with student success – but much of that engagement came in the form of questions about the reasoning behind the changes, complaining about the proposed groupings, and haggling over authority to assign advising responsibilities. The majority of the full-time faculty and staff recognized the need to have a mandatory advising program; they just couldn’t agree on how that mandatory program should be structured. The full-time faculty members initially met in their departments and then in their divisions to provide feedback, while counselors took responsibility for ironing out the nuts and bolts of the new plan with technology and enrollment services. Given limited technology resources, changes to state enrollment and data systems, and budget cuts that left few resources for paying faculty for additional duties, concerns arose about the timing of implementation, and it became clear that the initial plan to implement a new program in fall 2013 was too ambitious.

Since the timeline for implementation was delayed, institutional attention was turned to the role student services
staff members and the part-time faculty played in advising, and it was recognized that most student services
staff members reported that they were forbidden from advising and few part-time faculty members were
included in any advising roles. Surveys of and focus groups with staff members revealed frustrations with how
information about programs and departments was shared and how little faculty members knew about student
services processes. Student services staff members reported being at the forefront of questions from students,
while being under-prepared with information or unaware of where to refer students for assistance with advising
corns.

Efforts to expand engagement of part-time faculty were quite revealing about areas in which the college
needed to improve. In spring 2013, Dulin and others designed and implemented a survey of part-time faculty.
The survey included questions related to whether the part-time faculty members had been oriented to the
college, how they acquired information, whether they felt included, and what types of support they would like
to have available in what forms. A glaring shortcoming arose after Dulin constructed the distribution list for
the survey. While the college maintained a part-time faculty email distribution list, a comparison of that list to
employment records for the year revealed that nearly a third of part-time faculty members were not on the list:
They were not receiving any of the information distributed by the college through the email system. Part-time
faculty members responded that they wanted to be included in events, that they were not aware of many of the
available programs and resources, and that they wanted more information about students.

By the end of the 2012-2013 academic year, the first year of the PRESS grant, YVCC had succeeded in
proposing a mandatory pathway advising program, identifying the need for training full- and part-time
faculty for their advising role, and surfaced concerns about implementation that ranged from development
of technology to support advising to inclusion of student services staff members. The majority of full-time
faculty members was more deeply engaged in understanding the concerns of the YVCC student body and with
designing an advising program, but concerns about implementation overshadowed the willingness to proceed.
Faculty counselors, who had been leading the advising efforts, convinced the administration that leadership for
advising had to come from the deans. From summer 2013 on, therefore, the four deans assumed responsibility
for assigning advising responsibilities and requiring faculty members to participate in advising training.

A SECOND YEAR OF PLANNING
The 2013-2014 academic year began with an emphasis on the new advising program, advisor training on
technology tools, and discussions by pathway advising teams. Part-time faculty members were invited to
participate. But as had been the case previously, few actually attended. Rumblings were heard about when the
college might actually implement a new program, and pathway faculty continued to grapple with how to actually
conduct advising. A team of faculty from AFT-Yakima, the faculty union, met to review the academic calendar
in the hopes of identifying an advising day each quarter. In the end, the faculty agreed to set aside an advising
day each fall quarter and to convert a previous spring holiday into a spring advising day. In January 2014, The
YVCC Board of Trustees adopted a policy mandating advising for students until they reach 30 college-level
credits. Technology services worked on how to restrict registration until students had obtained release from
their faculty advisor. Faculty counselors continued to focus on training for advisors and serving the myriad of
students who sought advising through the counseling and advising center. Faculty met in pathway groups to
develop advising tools and distribute advising responsibilities. In spring 2014, the healthcare pathway advising
team successfully piloted an advising day, paving the way for full-implementation of the advising program in
winter 2015.
ENGAGEMENT? CHECK!
During the two years of YVCC’s involvement with the PRESS grant and the push for increasing engagement with student success initiatives, a number of institutional concerns and potential glitches came to light and are being addressed as YVCC moves forward with initiatives to improve student success. First and foremost, college leaders learned that committed leadership with the authority to assign responsibilities is necessary for moving an initiative forward. While faculty members need to rally behind a suggested improvement or even lead the charge, without the authority to assign duties, they are thwarted in their efforts. Secondly, even with this authority, change takes time! According to Davis Jenkins, CCRC researcher and consultant to YVCC about the pathway advising program, it takes five years to fully implement a change of the scale YVCC is attempting. Certainly, YVCC’s experience with phasing development of the advising program illustrates this point. Third, engagement is complicated and requires multiple opportunities for the intended participants to be exposed to information, to inform the processes, and to gain understanding and skills for participation. When information is shared, it may seem perfunctory to some in the audience, be overwhelming to others, or be a call to action for still others. The only thing leaders can assume is that there will be controversy when they attempt to increase engagement within a group of like-minded faculty and staff and certainly between groups of faculty and staff with differing interests and responsibilities.

Despite some setbacks to implementation of the new advising program, however, Dulin noted that YVCC has succeeded at increasing the breadth and depth of engagement with student-success initiatives. Almost 100 percent of the full-time faculty has been involved in discussions about advising, been exposed to student success data for the campus and their programs/courses in particular, and have participated in advisor training. Significant numbers of part-time faculty members now participate in department retreats focused on improving student success, and the deans invite part-time faculty members to attend division and campus meetings. Student support services and technology services staff members are included in teams that plan advising processes and tools, and plans are underway to more purposefully involve students in designing and reviewing advising protocols. An example of how engagement has increased is the implementation of the Title V Cooperative Grant YVCC received with nearby Heritage University in October, 2013. From the outset of the grant, campus personnel were invited to propose activities that would support improving student success. During the 2013-2014 academic year, 57 full-time faculty members (about 50% of the full-time faculty), 28 part-time faculty members (about 10 percent of the part-time faculty), 13 administrators, and 10 staff members participated in professional development they linked to student success activities in their areas. These personnel were required to identify the area they wished to address and the anticipated benefit of their participation. The effect of participation will be measured in 2014-2015 as projects are implemented in classes and services.

“YVCC has turned the corner and recognized that serving students well requires a campus-wide effort and a focus on the students,” Dulin noted in summary. “Given the fact that the face of the college is still its classroom instructors, it is imperative that faculty members – full and part-time – are knowledgeable about campus services, not just their course content, and that they work in concert with student support staff to ensure that students are supported in their persistence to degrees. This requires continuous professional development, exposure to data about students, and commitment to our community.”
B. ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES

ADDITIONAL CASE STUDY ONE
Kathryn Bauer
Tenured Faculty Counselor, Retired
Yakima campus

Kathryn Bauer loved her job. Much of what she did on YVCC’s Yakima campus for more than 26 years, until her retirement in December of 2013, is talk to students about changing their lives. “I loved a student coming in and, after an hour, coming up with a new plan. These are huge decisions in peoples’ lives.

“But there is a culture of college that has to be taught,” she continued. “It has to become a permeating aspect of their lives.” The new culture affects students’ personal lives as well as their academic and professional lives, and it involves sacrifices as well as rewards, Bauer noted. Academic advising can play a role in this “whole student” approach to student success, “and I think faculty can help with that. They just have to ask more questions.”

BACKGROUND
Bauer was initially hired as a faculty counseling specialist, a position which “morphed into” academic advising. She eventually took charge of orchestrating the process, especially new-student orientation, for the entire campus. Up until about 2008, Bauer said the college’s practical philosophy on advising had been along the lines of “mini-career planning”: Will your education get you ready for a career? Will it be a career that you’ll be happy doing? What kind of work have you been doing? Is it fun? Could you see yourself doing it for a lifetime? YVCC counselors then did the bulk of academic advising, including how to read and interpret the college catalog for students. But even the college’s counselors didn’t always agree on how to translate the college’s academic documents for students, Bauer said. The rest of the faculty were contractually – and, therefore, sometimes nominally – involved in “advising,” which each quarter looked for the most part like an en masse registration of students for classes.

In response during the 1990s, the college offered some “college seminar” courses designed to introduce students to the college culture and expectations. The courses were taught by faculty, including some faculty counselors, often as part of learning communities of two or more disciplines. Bauer said college seminar advocates knew the efforts to reach students were effective, she noted, but “we didn’t have any data!” Eventually, the initiative died out. Some arts and sciences faculty still resisted getting involved in advising for any other purpose than just signing up students for classes, Bauer added. Many claimed – and still claim – they are not qualified to advise students into courses of study that are beyond their fields of academic expertise, especially such fields as nursing, dental hygiene, criminal justice, and other health-related degree and certificated programs. Such reluctance and isolation contributed to the feeling of a campus separated into traditional academic “silos,” Bauer said. It was a “Swiss cheese process.” Bauer and others felt the holes had to be closed or at least acknowledged and addressed.

THE NACADA INITIATIVE
In 2007, Bauer was part of a 17-member team of YVCC faculty, administrators, and one staff person who went to training at a National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) in Salt Lake City.

“NACADA helped us look at our dysfunctional model,” Bauer said. Graduation numbers had been dipping, Bauer said, which was an indicator that students were getting lost in and discouraged with their academic
journeys. Students were advising themselves or listening to friends telling them to take the “easy” classes in order to qualify for financial aid, which they would then exhaust because the “easy” classes didn’t always translate into classes needed for a degree or certificate. The experience often left students with no money and no degree, Bauer noted. Class enrollment numbers were not a problem, she added, as students often were “fighting” to get into classes. They just were not completing courses of study.

Through the use of the NACADA training and other funding grants, such as Achieving the Dream, YVCC came up with new models for conducting New Student Orientation (NSO) and making attending NSO sessions mandatory. New students were sorted into one of four rooms by major or career path and/or whether they were going to be transfer students. The goal was to discover “What’s best for the students?,” and to have them jump through as few institutional hoops as possible to get the information and answers they needed. If a student wants to be a nurse, for example, what kinds of information does she need and when does she need it? However, not all students know, for example, the level of mathematics and chemistry needed for a four-year nursing degree from Washington State University. Maybe they are interested in the health-care field, but are not inclined to take on the number of science courses needed to complete such a degree. But there are many other options in the health-care “area of study.” How do we get that information to students and when? “The pathways model,” Bauer said, “was the next logical step.”

WALKING THE PATHWAYS MODEL
Students new to YVCC or college in general often do not enter with a clear picture of exactly what they want to study or a major, to say nothing of what a “major” is and how much academic preparation is necessary to complete a major or an undergraduate degree. The indecision often led students to take classes they did not need and the college not to offer enough classes for students who needed to get up to speed on mathematics and English, for example. As a result, faculty often provided well-meaning, perhaps, but misleading advice. As an example, Bauer noted that students may not know how much mathematics and chemistry are needed for one to become a nurse. To compensate, Bauer noted that counselors seemed to need further training in career-specific studies. But what to do with faculty members who, by and large, may have been erroneously steering students toward a specific education goal? Advising students toward a traditional direct transfer agreement (DTA) degree, for example, is “not rocket science,” Bauer said. And faculty in general seemed reluctant to offer specific advice in areas outside of their curriculum specialty or expertise.

“Faculty don’t want to look like they don’t know what they’re doing,” Bauer noted, “and I think that’s human nature.”

What to do, then, to improve the quality of advice while reassuring the student who may want training in a “helping” profession but either cannot do or doesn’t want the depth and breadth of study necessary to become a nurse, for example? Further discussion with counselors and faculty generated a model that suggested an initial “Area of Study” or “Pathway of Study” advising could replace the room of registering students for classes, at least until they accumulated enough college-level courses or qualified to be admitted to the program. But to accomplish that goal, the advising role of faculty in general would have to change as well. Individual faculty efforts would have to become team efforts on behalf of students’ needs and goals.

Bauer noted that “a lot of re-thinking” went into faculty and administrator discussions about changing their roles in advising, as well as informal conversations, general communications, and specific focus groups, beginning in fall of 2012 and the winter of 2013. Such communications and discussions should definitely continue as the wrinkles in the process are ironed out. “Stopping the talk about it will be the death of it!”
**NEXT STEPS**

In general, the pathways model will put faculty at the center of advising instead of counselors continuing in their role as default advisors when students get lost, Bauer said. “The decision to take [advising] out of the hands of the counseling center was a big one.” Faculty are the “generalist” advisors who can contribute their knowledge to the process, as well as look at the contribution of their specific disciplines to a particular pathway. However, counselors – especially current faculty-counselor Elizabeth DeVilleneuve, who took over Bauer’s orchestration role in 2014 – are at the center of the conversation, going forward, cajoling both faculty and administrators to undertake what Bauer readily admits is a philosophical change in campus culture regarding academic advising.

Once that transition is completed, Bauer said the theoretical future of academic advising could be turned over to faculty and administrators. But the guiding principle should not change, she said: “What’s best for the students?”

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**ADDITIONAL CASE STUDY TWO**

*Richard Schillinger*

*Faculty Counselor, Tenure Track*

*Yakima campus*

Counselor Rich Schillinger brings a “customer service” approach to academic advising, but with a non-material, interpersonal dimension. Advisors should be accessible to students and help them to develop an academic plan, map a career path, and identify course prerequisites, including any additional education necessary to meet those academic goals. But advisors should also keep in mind the need to balance “life” (childcare, a job or two, other family concerns, etc.) with a class schedule. Students who come in already knowing what to do, where to go, and how to get there are terrific advisees. More often, however, Schillinger said he finds students with a range of academic complications and extenuating circumstances that need to be addressed, sometimes at the same time the student is trying to keep his or her life together. “College” is a strange, new world for the single parent from a blue-collar family who has to work at least 20 hours a week to get by.

“It’s all new to them,” he said. “It really is. It’s downright frightening sometimes.”

**BACKGROUND**

Schillinger began at YVCC in August of 2012, moving to full-time in January of 2013. The relatively new faculty member is now on tenure track. He came to campus just as faculty focus groups began to sculpt the Pathways model in December of 2012. Schillinger said he was impressed by the fresh perspectives the 17 people – mostly faculty, though there was at least one financial-aid staff member, a career counselor, and the director of Student Life – brought to the discussion from a wide cross-section of disciplines and instructional divisions. The campus still was relying heavily on the faculty-registration model, new student orientation, and student follow-up method of academic advising when Schillinger arrived. The new pathways model, he said, has the potential to flesh out what faculty and staff is able to do with NSO, “but we’d get to spend more time. Some [students] the new student orientation confused.”

He said it was important to get faculty involved in advising in a more comprehensive manner, adding he was worried that limited staff members, especially in the financial aid office, were “bootstrapping it” to keep up with the volume of student questions, especially about the definition of “satisfactory academic progress.”
“We [faculty] could do more to help.”

THE PATHWAYS MODEL
Schillinger said, therefore, that he has been a supporter of the pathways model of sorting students by “area of interest” since the beginning. In fact, he said the first iteration of the pathways model – with one day set aside per quarter for faculty advising, with a cross-section of faculty assigned for each interest “pathway” – could have and should have worked. The original 17 individuals who developed it favored it, but afterward the rest of the faculty seemed skeptical.

“We didn’t get the buy-in,” he said.

Miscommunication, an apparent faculty reluctance to advise in curriculum areas in which they were not experts, and a faculty hesitancy to cut instructional days from their classes slowed the push for adoption, Schillinger noted.

NEXT STEPS
A change in faculty leadership within the individual pathways during winter and spring of 2014 seemed to reinvigorate the movement, Schillinger said. A change in the campus calendar and a campus poll that revealed 83 percent of faculty were in favor of mandatory student advising up until they achieve 30 college-level will help advance adoption of the model, he said. In addition, counseling and other faculty are still sifting feedback from the spring 2014, healthcare pathways advising “pilot.” Results are encouraging, but future polishing of the model is still in order. Such “communication” remains a key component of keeping faculty engaged in the change to pathways, Schillinger noted.

“I can’t think of a better model,” Schillinger concluded. “It’s exciting.”

C. SCAFFOLDING THE ‘WHOLE STUDENT’
The following represents the philosophy, research, statistics, and fifty-plus years of developmental and student self-advocacy teaching represented by YVCC’s “Scaffolds to Success” learning community faculty and curriculum designers, whose work has been sponsored since 2010 by a TRIO student-success grant. Much of this philosophy permeates the “Advising Pathways” model that YVCC currently is pursuing as a way to address “whole student” concerns as our traditional – but more so our non-traditional students – pursue their academic and professional careers and navigate the post-secondary educational institution: Strangers in a Strange Land!

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To guarantee that first-generation and Gen 1.5 college students stand the best chance to succeed in college, we need to lay a firm foundation. Both local and national research – as well as anecdotal evidence from our students over the years – indicates that we must teach the whole student. The “whole student” philosophy incorporates a number of factors that we may have heretofore considered beyond our control or beyond the scope of the classroom but which we in all seriousness can no longer ignore:

• **Family socio-economics.** Much of our developmental student population is poor Latino or poor white. Many of those students do not know, for example, the difference between – and the different salaries of – blue collar vs. white collar vs. pink collar workers, and how one “moves” between social groups (inherited wealth vs. educational accomplishment, for example). Many of our students don’t even know WHY one would WANT to move from one “class” to the next. They are totally disenfranchised. They don’t vote and
they don’t get involved in local, state, or national government. What’s the point? They assume the deck is stacked irrevocably against them. And in fact, without some kind of financial support and this kind of curricular and classroom analysis, it is!

- **Working history/working future.** Students’ awareness of their family working-world reality, work history, and its economic background in general is critical. They may not know, for example, that all jobs do NOT pay the same entry-level wage, that additional training, learning, or advanced degrees will yield potentially higher salaries. (General health-care providers and LPNs, for example, will not be paid the same as someone with a bachelor’s degree in nursing, for example.) Salaries may also depend on job availability, competition, and standards of living in particular markets across the country. These facts are news to many of our students but they are critical in career planning in general and courses of study in particular.

- **Second- and third-language linguistics.** We indeed have many students for whom “English” is a second language or Gen 1.5 students who hear only Spanish at home. We also need to remember, however, that “Academese” is a language or at least a rhetorical register unto itself. Academics think, speak, and write in a specific fashion. For most of our first-generation college students, this syntactically weird, strange-sounding “language” is as foreign as the English of Chaucer is to our ears. Add to that the additional filter of “hearing” through Spanish – that students are may be only now learning to be more fluent in conversational English – and we can see that “academics” for many families is a “third language” to navigate and juggle simultaneously.

- **Financial reality and knowledge.** The FAFSA, the IRS 1040 tax form, the concept of “cost of living,” the idea of a personal budget even if only paycheck to paycheck, not to mention the real cost of education over the next 20 years … these concepts are all foreign to most of our incoming students. But where and how do we deal with that reality in our general ed curriculum? Where does that happen? It doesn’t, unless we purposefully set out to make it part of our curriculum.

- **College culture and climate.** Persistence pays, but our students don’t always know that. Again, according to local (YVCC) research and national studies, encouraging faculty, fellow students, academic advisors, even the custodians to work toward a culture of acceptance and understanding will pay off in student retention and long-term achievement.

These other assumptions, practices, inquiries, and assessments are behind the development of the YVCC-TRIO “Scaffolds to Success” developmental curriculum and the support practices in subsequent Trio learning communities (“Rhetoric and Reason I” and “Rhetoric and Reason II”).
ENGAGING FACULTY AND STAFF IN THE STUDENT SUCCESS AGENDA