Monitoring Report: Academic Alignment

March 19, 2011
Presented by:
Student Success Strategic Leadership Team Committee
Ric Underhile – Team Leader

Policy Type: Ends
Policy Title: Student Success

GRCC students achieve their educational goals.

I. This End comprises three broad strategies:

Strategy 5.1: Improve student support services that promote success in their academic, community and personal lives.

Strategy 5.2: Acquire highly qualified, diverse faculty and continue to provide opportunities for professional development

Strategy 5.3: Create, revise, monitor and assess curriculum and learning

Defining Student Success

Improvement of student support services, student engagement with well-prepared and diverse faculty, and a coherent curriculum are all cornerstones of best practices for promoting student success within institutions of higher education. Indeed, the National Postsecondary Educational Consortium has found twelve characteristics common to colleges and universities that effectively help students achieve their educational goals:

1. First-year experience and other transition programs
2. Opportunities for active and experiential learning
3. Institutional commitment to supporting students time on task (promoting mastery of skill--not just exposure)
4. Frequent faculty contact
5. Engagement with diversity
6. Setting and holding students to high expectations
7. A coherent curriculum
8. Integration of classroom and other learning experiences (i.e., internships, practica, etc)
9. Collaborative learning
10. Frequent feedback
11. Diversity of ways of knowing and learning
12. Integration of knowledge, experiences, and skills (opportunities for "real world" synthesis of content and ability).

These efforts are implemented at GRCC through our Strategic Plan. Operationally, this includes realizing College Action Projects, Department Action Projects, and many other programs, services, and systems of support. To actively assess the impact of these efforts—especially where need for improvement was noted, the Board approved the following Student Success indicators:
II. Student Success includes 11 indicators:

1. Student achievement of goals at GRCC
2. Successful completion or transfer
3. Completion rate for first time, full time students
4. Fall to fall retention rate (for first-time, degree-seeking students)
5. Fall to winter retention rate (part- and full-time degree-seeking students)
6. Course success rates
7. Student Engagement Benchmarks
8. Entering Student Benchmarks of Effective Practice
9. GRCC faculty/staff mirrors the student body in terms of minority representation
10. GRCC remains fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association; individual programs remain accredited by their corresponding accrediting agencies where applicable.
11. Student performance at transfer institutions of higher education

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1 Based on the GRCC Alumni Survey. This information is qualitative alumni self-report.
2 Based on the State of Michigan metric of the percentage of students who successfully complete a degree, earn a certificate or transfer to another institution within six years.
3 Based on the National Community College Benchmark Project definition of retention.
4 Course success rates at GRCC are defined as the percentage of students in gateway courses (e.g., entry level math and English) who earn grades ranging from A to C.
5 Based on definitions provided by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement: Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, Student-Faculty Interactions, and Support for Learners.
6 Based on definitions provided by the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE): Early Connections, High Expectations and Aspirations, Clear Academic Plan and Pathway, Effective Track to College Readiness, Engaged Learning, Academic and Social Support Network.
7 Transfer students vs. native students GPA as reported by individual four-year institutions; graduation as reported by the National Student Clearinghouse.
The following graphic illustrates the status of each of the aforementioned Student Success indicators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator of Success</th>
<th>Current Year</th>
<th>Prior Year</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students achieve their goals for attending GRCC(^8)</td>
<td>96.0%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>✅✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Successful completion or transfer(^9)</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>✅✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Completion rate for first time, full time students</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>✅✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fall-to-Fall retention rate for first time, degree-seeking students(^10)</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>✅✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Fall-to-Winter retention rate for part- and full-time students.</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>✅✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Course success rates(^11)</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>✅✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Student Engagement Benchmarks.(^12)</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>✅✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Entering Student Benchmarks of Effective Practice.(^13)</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
<td>N/A (First year, no previous data)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. GRCC faculty/staff mirrors the student body in terms of minority representation</td>
<td>Minority staff = 18.7%  Minority students = 25.0%</td>
<td>Minority staff = 18.8% Minority students = 24.3%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. GRCC remains fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association; individual programs remain accredited by their corresponding accrediting agencies where applicable.</td>
<td>GRCC is fully accredited until 2014-2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Student performance at transfer institutions of higher education.</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>✅✅</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^8\) Based on the GRCC Alumni Survey. This information is qualitative alumni self-report.

\(^9\) Based on the State of Michigan metric of the percentage of students who successfully complete a degree, earn a certificate or transfer to another institution within six years.

\(^10\) Based on the National Community College Benchmark Project (NCCBP) definition of retention.

\(^11\) Course success rates at GRCC are defined as the percentage of students in gateway courses (e.g., entry-level math or English) who earn grades ranging from A to C.

\(^12\) Based on definitions provided by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE): Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Academic Challenge, Student- Faculty Interactions, and Support for Learners.

\(^13\) Based on definitions provided by the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE): Early Connections, High Expectations and Aspirations, Clear Academic Plan and Pathway, Effective Track to College Readiness, Engaged Learning, Academic and Social Support Network.
III. In an effort to more effectively support and sustain the accomplishment of the Student Success indicators, the following 9 College Action Projects (CAP) have been approved and implemented by the College

1. Mandate the student success course (CLS 100) for all first-time, degree seeking students, PY 097 for developmental students. CAP 5.1.1
The purpose of this project is to make CLS 100 mandatory for new, degree seeking students. Students who take CLS 100 have a higher fall to winter and fall to fall retention rate than new students who do not take CLS 100. Students who place into two or more developmental courses are required to take PY097. Activities of this project include increasing the faculty pool to teach the course and registration automation to make students aware of the requirement to enroll in one of the courses.

Supports GRCC Values: Excellence, Responsiveness, Accountability, Integrity

Success Indicators: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS7, SS8

2. Strengthen the recruitment and hiring process so to attract highly qualified, highly diverse full-time and adjunct faculty. CAP 5.2.1
The purpose of this project is to review, improve and expand our processes regarding recruitment, selection and retention of our faculty workforce. We need to continue to attract, develop and engage a diverse workforce.

Supports GRCC Value: Diversity.

Success Indicator: SS9

3. Implementation of the Early Alert System. CAP 5.1.2
The Early Alert system is an electronic system whereby faculty can make counselors/ advisors aware that they have a concern regarding a student’s ability to be successful in their class. Flags can be raised by faculty who have a concern regarding a student’s behavior, attendance or performance in their class. An automatic flag is raised on students in online classes who haven’t logged in within 7 consecutive days. Once a flag is raised, either the student’s counselor/advisor (if they are assigned one) or the retention specialist follow up with the student to help them identify resources to get back on a track of success.

Supports GRCC Values: Accountability, Excellence, Innovation, Responsiveness

Success Indicators: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, SS7, SS8, SS11

4. Improving the Adjunct Experience. CAP 5.2.2
For year one (2010-11) of this three-year project (2010-13), the goals were to develop consistent yet discipline-appropriate, effective, and efficient ways to recruit, hire, and orient new adjunct faculty. (The goals for years two and three are to improve the support [teaching and learning infrastructure] for adjuncts and to improve the evaluation process for adjuncts.

Supports GRCC Values: Accountability, Diversity, Excellence, Integrity, Responsiveness

Success Indicators: SS7, SS8, SS9

5. Strengthen faculty professional development programs and processes. CAP 5.2.3
The primary purpose of this Project is to refine the College’s faculty professional development efforts into a coordinated, intentional, curriculum that recognizes, responds, and reflects on the talents and educational needs of full-time and adjunct faculty. Additionally, the Project will promote the development of resources to ensure that faculty have physical and virtual spaces to discuss and enhance their scholarship and practice of teaching and learning.
6. Implement Reading Apprenticeship Project. CAP 5.3.1

The purpose of this project is to address the general tendency toward low success rates of students in developmental classes and in basic gateway classes. The basic components are:

- Provide professional development to faculty and staff
- Create and implement Reading Apprenticeship interventions
- Collect baseline and post-intervention data to see if interventions made any impact

Success Indicators: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, SS7, SS8, SS9, SS10, SS11

7. Develop and implement a new model of Program Review based on program learning outcomes. CAP 5.3.2

The new model of Program Review will focus on assessing students' achievement of program learning outcomes. Since assessment is most meaningful with multiyear measures, the new model will be an every 4 year formal review cycle. The first quarter of programs will begin the process in 2011-12. Prior to the beginning of this project, all programs will identify and prioritize their program level outcomes. Significant professional development and support will be provided to all programs in the first year of this project around assessing outcomes, with even more support provided to the first cohort of programs who will do the review process. Twenty programs are doing review in the 2011-12 year, all have identified assessment projects, and are currently in the process of doing their review, which are due in May.

Success Indicators: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS10, SS11

8. Establish an Assessment and reporting Process for Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). CAP 5.3.3

Student attainment of the four ILOs will be measured in both curricular and co-curricular learning activities. Each department/program or student service provider will identify which ILO and at what level, and develop an assessment process to measure them. The data gathered will be used to plan improvements to student learning experiences, and the improvements will be assessed to measure effectiveness. The first step, which has been accomplished, was to build awareness of the ILOs and to integrate them into the Course Document in CARP (Course Approval and Review Process) and the Academic Program Review Process.

Success Indicators: SS3, SS10, SS11

9. Promote data based decision-making including the implementation of a data warehouse. CAP 5.3.4

The GRCC data warehouse will be a collection of transactional data gathered and organized so that it can be easily analyzed, extracted, synthesized, and otherwise used for the purposes of further understanding the data and decision-making process.

Success Indicators: SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, SS7, SS9
Additional Efforts to Promote Student Success
In addition to these CAP, the College also has a comprehensive set of other initiatives and programs that are led by Departments (i.e., Department Action Projects). Some of those include: Articulation and Career Path Building, Cross College Career Development Integration, Fast Track Learning Program for Job Training, Degree Audit and Apply to Graduate, Enhancing Classroom and Instructional Technologies, Language Arts Lab: Literacy Empowerment Project, Mandatory New Student Orientation, Mandatory Placement and Accuplacer Improvements, and Service Area Review and Development of Student Learning Outcomes in all Student Affairs Areas.

IV. Critical Issues

Critical issues can best be understood under two broad headings: 1) the need to study and respond to the various influences that compromise student success and 2) the need for a systems approach to addressing, supporting, and sustaining student success issues. Each of those headings is described below.

Solutions to Influences that Compromise Student Success
The success of students begins much earlier than the postsecondary years and is shaped through the influences of families, peers, teachers, counselors, cultural factors, and K–12 school curricula and extracurricular activities. Thus, to positively impact student success, college and community efforts must consider and where possible, collaborate with these other influences.

Toward a Systems Approach to Supporting Student Success
Effective support of sustained student success efforts like the ones described in our Student Success indicators and those listed above require four systems of institutional support:

1. Institutional Leadership and Funding
2. Having the Right People in the Right Positions
3. Strategic Use of Resources
4. Internal and External Communication and Collaboration

Where are we seeing problems (as it relates to student success and the assigned end)?
Pacing the identification of needs with program development and resource allocation. It is tempting to try to do everything all at once—and we simply don’t have the staff or resources for that—we have to be judicious in our decision-making as it pertains to supporting student success—we cannot have a series of false starts—nor can we be reckless or reactive. Further, the work to support student success has to be thoughtfully incremental, not meteoric.

Additionally, the needs of community college students have become increasingly complex. For example, the total number of students enrolling in at least one Academic Foundations Program (AFP) course was 2552 in the 2007-2008 academic year. So far, for the 2011-2012 school year the total number of students enrolling in at least one AFP course is 5131, an increase of 101%. Exponential growth within the student population who have the greatest challenges for student success strain our system at every stage—planning, staffing, responding, developing programs, implementing programs, assessing the impact of the program, and making adjustments to the programs to better meet the use and access patterns of our students.

How will we address those problems?
According to The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) Michigan ranks 44th in terms of enrollment of state administered adult basic education programs. We can best address the problems described above by engaging in best practices while seeking opportunities to collaborate with other institutions of higher education, community partners, and student success initiatives.
We also must strive for a more systematic strategy for influencing (and where possible) partnering with K-12 institutions. The challenges to student success begin before students arrive at GRCC; so too must our partnerships and solutions. And so, our enrollment management strategies have to start early, be intertwined with secondary institutions, build bridges to our academic programs, and support and sustain students through the accomplishment of their academic goals at GRCC.

What is the time-line for achieving the goals set forth by the end?
Each student success indicator should be considered ongoing, but revisable. They must provide a framework for our institutional thinking, but allow for enough flexibility that they can respond to the changing needs of our student population. The College will likely never fully accomplish the student success indicators—they should continue to be aspirational—that is—as we make progress we should consider raising the benchmarks. However, assessment of accomplishment of the indicators should occur at the end of each academic semester. Through intentional, focused, and yet parsimonious data gathering our systems of support for student success will gain strength and provide necessary institutional stability for our students.