

# LACCD Student Success Initiative

## Steering Committee

January 25, 2007

### Minutes

Attendees: David Beaulieu (ELAC), Kathleen Burke-Kelly (LAMC), Gary Colombo (DO), Marcy Drummond (LATTTC), Chini Johnson-Taylor (LATTTC), Daryl Kinney (LACC), Alexandra Maeck (LACC), Leon Marzillier (DAS—LAVC), Joy McCaslin (LAPC), Ed Pai (WLAC), Abbie Patterson (LAHC), George Prather (DO), Pat Siever (WLAC), Scott Weigand (LAVC)

Absent: Laurence Bradford (LACC), John Clerx (District), Jack Daniels (LASC), Angela Echeverri (LAMC), Pat Flood (LAMC), Tony Gamble (WLAC), Patrick Jefferson (LASC), David Jordan (LAMC), Stanislav Levin (DO), Joyce Moore (LACC), Laurie Nalepa (LAVC), Sabrina T. Odom (LASC), Genevieve Patthey-Chavez (LACC), Hector Plotquin (LACC), Gary Prostack (LAMC), Joe Ramirez (LAMC), La Vergne Rosow (DAS—LAVC), Sally Raskoff (LAVC), Rebecca Tillberg (LACC), R.C. Williams III (ELAC), Mercy Yanez (LAHC), Maria Elena Yepes (ELAC)

### **Minutes of 12/13/06**

The committee reviewed and approved, with minor revisions, the minutes of the SSI Steering Committee meeting held on December 13, 2006.

### **Language Arts Basic Skills Taskforce Update**

D. Beaulieu reported that the English Language Arts Basic Skills Taskforce met for the third time on January 12<sup>th</sup> and had another lively and wide-ranging discussion. At this point the group is interested in exploring the idea of radically challenging the current approach to basic skills instruction, and spent some time discussing alternatives to the intensive, multiple-unit courses that are current standard practice. The Basic Skills Taskforce is also considering staging a spring workshop featuring LaGuardia College, so that District faculty and administrators can learn more about topics like LaGuardia's approach to learning communities, e-portfolios, and intensive orientations (please see below).

During the ensuing discussion, a number of concerns were voiced and points made, including the following:

- Any discussion of basic skills must address the idea of “embedding” instruction across the curriculum, and should not be limited to the pairing of basic skills and “content” courses.
- We already have excellent models of contextualized basic skills instruction in the contract ed programs at LAVC.
- We must be sure to include faculty from Learning Skills, Developmental Communications, Counseling, and other basic skills disciplines in this discussion.
- We also need to include students.
- We need to communicate the work done here and in the taskforce more widely—perhaps through a newsletter.
- While Learning Communities (LCs) offer a widely-recognized approach to improving basic skills, they are often too expensive and labor intensive.
- This is true of most basic skills interventions—including basic English courses that require 4-6 hours of instructor's time.

- One of the central problems is student resistance to basic skills placement recommendations—because of the stigma and because of the time commitment required.
- The STARS program at LAVC offers one simple approach to “embedding” basic skills across the curriculum.
- Ultimately, we’ll need to “loosen” our definition of what constitutes a Learning Community if we’re going to succeed in reaching all the basic skills students who need extra support.
- If we’re going to get anything done in the immediate future, we need to think of the basic skills effort along two different timelines—one that involves short-term practical ideas and approaches that we enact immediately, and one that involves more ambitious long-term planning.
- One simple approach might involve making it easier for faculty to refer students to college writing centers.
- A more “out-of-the-box” approach would be to attach ½ or one unit supplemental writing courses to content classes.
- Heavy dependence on adjunct faculty to teach basic skills courses might complicate anything we do.
- Learning Communities work well for more “traditional” entering students—those who are younger and more goal-focused. For this population, LCs could be scaled up relatively easily by integrating academic courses, counseling, matriculation, and outreach to high schools.
- There are about 4-500 students in LCs at El Camino each year and another 4-500 in their Supplemental Instruction program. We might be able to expand to this level using the additional matriculation funding that will be available next year.
- Recently, SSI committee members from Pierce visited Chaffey College which has undertaken a major basic skills revision effort and, as a result, has created specific “centers” for basic writing, reading, math, and multi-disciplinary support. Each center has a dedicated faculty member who works with referred students, with whole classes, and with other faculty. This idea spreads basic skills support—and even the LC idea—more broadly across the college.
- West has been experimenting quite successfully with paired English/ESL and on-line PD courses—an approach that increases students’ technological literacy as well as their traditional basic skills.
- Unfortunately, the most critical problem in terms of student success is in math. At ELAC, math faculty are expressing frustration with lower level courses, and debating the creation of a “basic skills academy” that would be staffed by faculty specifically trained to teach elementary computation, etc.
- We need to build relationships with local secondary school teachers and university faculty who know about basic skills instruction. Currently, Mission College is partnering with math faculty from CSUN to improve basic skills math outcomes.
- Two central themes seem to capture the effective parts of all of these ideas and interventions: “integrated education”—the need to help basic skills students make connections between classes, skill sets, academic and real world experience, etc. and “self regulation”—Myron Dembo’s idea that the real aim of basic skills instruction is to help students become autonomous life-long self-educators.

As the result of this discussion, it was agreed to bring representatives from Chaffey College to do a presentation on their basic skills efforts on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

## **AB 1417**

G. Prather led committee members in a review of the final draft of the ARCC AB 1417 outcome measures. He noted that it makes more sense to read the outcomes in reverse order, beginning with basic skills improvement rates, since basic skills represents the foundation of all student success. Overall, the year-to-year changes in the latest draft appear to have been reduced somewhat. A lively discussion about the meaning of these data ensued. D. Beaulieu challenged the “behavioral” definition of the cohorts used to measure transfer/degree/certificate outcomes, which limit this group to students who have already

successfully completed 12 units, and thus increases the success rate for these outcomes. He noted that in the TRUCCS studies more than 75% of all student indicated a transfer goal when asked. G. Prather observed that nearly 60% of all new students typically complete only one course—a fact that suggests they may come to college with limited educational goals in mind. Ultimately, it was agreed that, as a District, we need to do a much better job of identifying, reinforcing, and updating student goals if we are to generate meaningful student success data. It was also noted that we must code our basic skills course sequences more accurately and gather completion rate data for courses in other disciplines as well as math, English and ESL.

Committee members also spent some time discussing strategies for college responses to the AB 1417 reports, which are due to the State on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. In general, it was agreed that the colleges should adopt a positive approach in their responses, by emphasizing current plans for improving all 1417 measures.

### **Student Success Initiative Self Assessment**

The committee reviewed a preliminary draft of an SSI “self assessment checklist,” which could be used later this term by college SSI committees to assess their progress and focus their future efforts. G. Colombo offered to continue refining this document over the next week and to email a more developed draft to all SSI Steering Committee members by February 2<sup>nd</sup>. He suggested that it might be used in combination with the transfer and basic skills “inventories” that Alicia Dowd has developed at USC, if Prof. Dowd grants the District permission to employ these tools. It was also suggested that the committee contact Bob Gabriner to find out more about the basic skills inventory that the Research and Planning Group is currently preparing in support of the State basic skills initiative.

### **Spring Event Planning**

At the suggestion of the Basic Skills Taskforce, G. Colombo contacted Cecelia Macheski of LaGuardia College to find out if she would be available to return to LA with at least one additional colleague to offer a follow-up session to last spring’s student success workshop. Committee members agreed to schedule this event for April 13<sup>th</sup>. It was also agreed that prior to this date, several SSI Steering Committee members would visit LaGuardia as a team to learn more about their integrated approach to student success and to help plan the April event. To round off its schedule of spring activities, the committee agreed to invite representatives from Chaffey College to present their basic skills center concept to interested parties on Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. J. McCaslin and I. Goodman offered to provide contact information for Chaffey, and G. Colombo will follow up by negotiating dates and times with Chaffey reps and by sending an email to solicit interest in the future trip to LaGuardia.

### **SSI Spring Meeting Calendar**

The following dates and times were agreed upon for future SSI Steering Committee Meetings:

**Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2:00—4:00 p.m.**

**Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. (Chaffey Basic Skills Center Presentation)**

**Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2:00—4:00 p.m.**

**Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. (LaGuardia Workshop)**

**Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2:00—4:00 p.m.**

### **Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the SSI Steering Committee will meet next on Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. at Trade Tech College. (Now scheduled for the District “Showroom.”)