perspectives

RP Group | August 2014

For many of you, welcome to the fall term! City planner extraordinaire Daniel Hudson Burnham once said, "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work."

Over the past academic year, the RP Group has been making big plans. Through a new partnership, RP has handed over its administrative functions (e.g., contracting, accounting for revenues and expenses, information technology) to the Foundation for California Community Colleges (FCCC), thereby freeing RP staff time to focus on other organizational priorities.

One such priority is to recapitalize the P (Planning) in RP (Research and Planning). Though its research and evaluation efforts have been strong and consistent over the years, RP has worked in fits and starts to support community colleges in their strategic and integrated planning work. To strengthen and make consistent the planning support to community colleges, RP has launched two initial efforts:

- **A series of articles about Planning in *Perspectives*.** Linda Umbdenstock and Julie Slark will develop a series of articles about planning for Perspectives over the next few months. Their goal is to revive RP Group's planning mission with articles highlighting provocative and practical ideas, suggestions and reflections. *Linda and Julie served as founding RP Group Board members and Presidents, and between the two of them have decades of experience serving as the planning officers in California community colleges. They have provided leadership and consulting services for innumerable college, regional and special project institutional effectiveness initiatives. Last July, Julie was awarded by the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) for her exceptional contributions to higher education planning.*
- **An RP Board Planning and Policy Chair.** RP Board member Denice Inciong will serve as the organization's first Planning and Policy Chair. In the planning capacity, she will partner with the RP Board Professional Development Chair to promote planning-related professional development opportunities, bring planning-related issues to the Board, promote planning-related contracts and funding, and develop relationships with planning-related organizations, such as SCUP and the Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). *Denice serves as the District Director of Research, Planning & Data Management for the South Orange County Community College District where she is deeply involved in planning activities.*

Happy reading!

Sincerely,
The RP Group

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Announcements

Announcing the 2014-15 RP Group Board
See the full slate of the RP Group Board members, including the President and Executive Committee, for the 2014-2015 academic year here.

New Senior Researchers Hired to Evaluate CCCCO Initiatives
The RP Group serves as the evaluator for the statewide Common Assessment, Education Planning and Online Education Initiatives of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. To conduct these evaluations, RP has hired three Senior Researchers--Alyssa Nguyen, Tim Quoc Nguyen and Ireri Valenzuela--who collectively bring years of experience in institutional research and planning, assessment, training, project management and evaluation. Their bios will be up on RP Group website soon.

Statewide Spotlight: Launching and Strengthening Dual Enrollment Opportunities for California's Historically Underserved Students

Author: *Rogéair Purnell*, Senior Researcher, The RP Group and Director, Gateway to College at Laney College

Dual enrollment is defined as an opportunity for students to complete college-level coursework for college credits while they are pursuing their high school diplomas. Traditionally, these programs have allowed high school students who are excelling academically to take on more advanced coursework as an on-ramp to college. More recently, research examining the effects of dual enrollment participation on historically underrepresented minority students (URM)* suggests that dual enrollment opportunities can prepare all students to succeed in college. Many students--regardless of their previous school performance--who enroll in programs that offer dual enrollment opportunities have more positive academic outcomes at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. Some of the positive outcomes associated with dual enrollment programs include on-time high school graduation, more proficient scores on standardized assessments, less time to degree completion (Kirst et al., 2009), larger gains in college credit attainment and higher GPAs than similar peers (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; CCRC, 2012, p. 4).

However, a limited number of dual enrollment opportunities exist for URM students and many existing efforts are challenged by funding constraints and in some cases, state policies that limit student eligibility, available funding and program structure. In an effort to help support the development of new and strengthen the work of existing dual enrollment efforts, the RP Group, in partnership with San Joaquin Delta College and the California Community College Chancellor's Office, studied dual enrollment initiatives--specifically those efforts designed to create opportunities for URM youth to complete community college courses while in high school. Two goals for this research were to:

1. Identify dual enrollment efforts that have a particular focus on increasing equity (through the deliberate targeting of underrepresented student populations)
2. Develop information for both community college and high school leaders that can facilitate decision making about and the development of these kinds of initiatives

The dual enrollment guide is the result of an extensive literature review combined with interviews with national experts and local directors. Structured in a user-friendly format, it highlights:

- Opportunities that exist to launch these programs;
- Approaches, strategies and policies associated with successful program implementation; and
- Outcomes, common indicators and benchmarks tracked by programs that are focused on recruiting, engaging and serving URM students.

Specifically, it provides:

- Key defining dual enrollment program components, characteristics, practices and policies to actively recruit, engage and serve these students
- Indicators and data sources that partnering school districts and colleges can use to monitor progress at the student, program and institutional levels

Administrators, instructors / teachers and staff at both the secondary and postsecondary levels who have an interest in launching or strengthening dual enrollment efforts for URM students can use this guide to learn about existing efforts that may inform their own.

*Underrepresented minority (URM) students are defined here as those who have struggled academically and who are low-income, first-generation college goers, male, and/or members of a racial or ethnic group that traditionally has not pursued or successfully completed a postsecondary credential in great numbers.

Resources:

- [A Guide to Launching and Expanding Dual Enrollment Programs for Historically Underserved Students in California](#)

- Hughes, K. L., Rodriguez, O., Edwards, L. and Belfield, C. (2012). Broadening the benefits of dual enrollment: Reaching underachieving and underrepresented students with career-focused programs. New York, NY: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Citations:

- Kirst, M. W., Venezia, A., & Nodine, T. (2009). Ramp-up to college in California: A new vision to improve college readiness in California. Princeton, NJ: The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation.

- Allen, D., & Dadgar, M. (2012). Does dual enrollment increase students' success in college? Evidence from a quasi-experimental analysis of dual enrollment in New York City. New Directions for Higher Education, 158, 11-20. doi:10.1002/he.20010

Research: The RP Group's Pioneering Study, Student Support (Re)defined, Concludes

Student Support (Re)defined

Equitable
Integrated
Cost Effective

Authors: *Kelley Karandjeff*, Senior Researcher and *Darla Cooper*, Director of Research and Evaluation, The RP Group

In spring 2014, the RP Group concluded Student Support (Re)defined--a three-year study designed to understand how community colleges can feasibly deliver support both inside and outside the classroom to improve success for all students. A final project description provides a high-level summary of study findings as well as a quick guide to the numerous resources and tools generated by the project.

Surveys and focus groups conducted with almost 900 students at 13 California community colleges drove this research, adding critical student perspectives to the current movement to significantly increase community college success. The RP Group followed this student perspectives research with nearly two years of dissemination through a broad range of methods and venues. In addition, we provided technical assistance to colleges interested in using the findings to advance achievement in their institutions.

Through this effort, the RP Group reached an unprecedented number of practitioners with our research results. College feedback indicates that Student Support (Re)defined has helped institutions reflect on their own practice and pursue change efforts designed to meet new state student success mandates and/or accreditation requirements while keeping the student experience front and center. We thank the numerous colleges that either participated directly in the research and/or welcomed our organization to their campus for a presentation, workshop or regional research convening. We are also grateful to the 21 advisers who helped shape the direction and strengthen the impact of the project. Finally, we appreciate each of the California community college constituent groups and associations that included this effort in conferences, committee meetings and strategic planning sessions. For a list of the advisers, research team and study colleges please go here.

The RP Group aims to build on the success of Student Support (Re)defined and is currently seeking additional funding to further explore how integrated support can advance students' achievement. While Student Support (Re)defined has come to an end, numerous resources and tools resulting from the study will remain available on our website here. These

resources include:

- [Practically Speaking: Community College Practices that (Re)define Student Support](): A primer featuring 23 practices that demonstrate the study's five themes and six success factors
- [Action Guide: Exploring Ways to Strengthen Student Support at Your College](): A tool to enhance campus-based student support initiatives through an inquiry and planning process using the study's results
- Printable Graphics: Visuals that display the [six success factors]() as well as [student perspectives on effective support]()
- [10 Ways Everyone Can Support Student Success](): Practical advice based on students' suggestions for how anyone working on a college campus can support their success
- [10 Ways Faculty Can Support Students' Success](): Practical advice that highlights students' ideas for how faculty can integrate support in and out of the classroom
- [Research in Action](): Project webpage that includes examples of how community colleges are using Student Support (Re)defined on their campuses
- [Using Student Voices to Redefine Support: What Community College Students Say Institutions, Instructors and Others Can Do to Help Them Succeed](): A full report of student perspectives on the six success factors
- [What Students Say They Need to Succeed: Key Themes from a Study of Student Support](): A brief outlining five actionable themes from the research

Colleges interested in a presentation of the Student Support (Re)defined research or customized technical assistance designed to help your institution use study findings for action can contact Dr. Darla Cooper, Director of Research and Evaluation, at [dcooper@rpgroup.org]() for more information.

Planning: Ten Proven and Provocative Tips for Making Planning Practical

Authors: *Linda Umbdenstock* and *Julie Slark*, Founding Board Members, The RP Group

Reading planning articles in *Perspectives* e-newsletters, hearing about RP Awards recognizing excellence in planning and conducting interviews of selected leaders instrumental in the formation and development of the RP Group for the RP Group's History Project all stimulated our desire to participate in the conversation about the progress of the discipline of planning and institutional effectiveness. We learned ourselves about effective planning by serving as the go-to planning officers at our "home" colleges for many years, and additionally, by leading student success initiatives and strategic and educational master planning efforts at community colleges across the country.

While a body of how-to literature relative to structured planning exists, we want to contribute our thinking on the practical--perhaps provocative--so-what? and next-step planning topics. Below are ten practical tips that ascend to the top of our list of very hands-on advice--tips not usually found in the formal literature but intended to complement known good practice.

1. **Have fun!** Make planning fun, with events, creativity, food, visual effects, social interaction, traditions and high energy. At the same time, ensure the credibility, sustainability, validity and integrity of planning efforts, and that efforts reflect the culture and traditions of the college.
2. **Develop specific implementation plans.** Ensure that all plans include specific measurable objectives and implementation strategies, timelines and assigned responsibilities. Who is going to do what by when and for what purpose? A planning structure, or "model," would also include timelines for measuring progress towards goals and adjusting implementation strategies if needed.
3. **Update, update, update.** When creating any plan, include mechanisms for updating the plan's goals, objectives and implementation strategies on an annual or bi-annual basis. Don't be afraid to change elements within a plan, as circumstances change.
4. **Maintain an effective web presence.** Maintain a current, centralized and well-organized planning website that includes all planning documents and updates. If your college is part of a multi-college district, maintain a district website that is well-coordinated and similarly structured to align with college websites. Effective websites are critical for users to comprehend the structures and practices of planning activities "on the ground."
5. **Designate a planning officer.** Identify someone at the college (and at the district, if appropriate) as the "planning officer"--someone who is in charge of leading and coordinating planning efforts, and who is experienced in the discipline of planning. Secure a "coach" to support this person, if he or she is not experienced. Ensure that this position is financially and organizationally supported.
6. **Expand the definition of resources.** When linking plans to resource allocation, consider resources beyond the traditional connections to discretionary budget and new faculty allocations. Include alignment with professional development efforts, space planning, faculty and staff time and schedules, meeting agendas, college events and technology leadership. Be creative.
7. **Create visuals.** Depict planning structures, levels, models, schedules and linkages graphically as well as in narrative, and keep this as simple, elegant and engaging as possible. Consider mapping out how individuals' routines interact with the broader planning activities and goals.
8. **Engage!** Meaningfully engage as many faculty, staff and stakeholders in planning as is manageable, but the more the better.
9. **Drive planning by leveraging the same force.** The participatory governance group that oversees budget should be the same group that oversees planning. This group's regular review of planning and resource effectiveness responsibly ensures not only progress, but also the credibility, sustainability, validity and integrity of planning efforts.
10. **Demonstrate progress.** Report widely and regularly on progress towards planning goals and objectives. Is planning worth the effort?

Our hope is that college planning leaders consider and share these tips, adapt them to the unique cultures and needs of individual colleges and benefit with more effective and efficient planning processes.

Assessment: Game Theory--Bringing Simulations to the Classroom

Author: *Robert Pacheco*, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, MiraCosta College and Assessment Chair, The RP Group

What better way to engage students in twentieth century Indian history than by having students "be" Nehru, delivering a speech in character to classmates?

Or, how better to have students understand disease control than by having them role play how to stop the spread of a virus across a continent via a digital game in real time?

Faculty at Barnard College, a women's liberal arts college affiliated with Columbia University, have long had an interest in using simulations and games in classrooms as a way to apply concepts presented in real-world scenarios. In fact, 2014 marked the fourteenth annual faculty institute which highlights its "Reacting to the Past" program. This program trains history faculty on how to bring students virtually back to historic places such as France during the time of revolution, Rwanda during the final decades of the past century, and Greenwich Village during the time of the suffrage movement.

The simulations movement caught the attention of the editors at the Chronicle for Higher Education who published a three-part series this summer on simulations as a way to engage students in the learning through playing games and engaging in role play.

Barnard College is not alone. Faculty members such as Kurt Squire, professor of digital media at the Wisconsin Institute of Discovery, see games and simulations as the perfect opportunity to apply concepts presented in real-world scenarios. Simulations are also very popular in thematic instruction-based high schools that look to enhance learning through experience. The concept of role-play and games in the classroom is presented in a book by Barnard professor, Marc C. Carnes.

Students who participate in games and simulations report greater engagement in the curriculum, a deeper sense of self, and, even an added thrill of competition with others.

<u>Resources</u>:

- Being Nehru for 2 Days (The first of a three-part series by the Chronicle of Higher Education)
- Interact Simulations
- Mark C. Carnes, Minds on Fire: How Role-Immersion Games Transform College (Harvard University Press)