

perspectives

RP Group | January 2015

On Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day (last Monday), two strangers have a conversation. Brandon asks Vidal, "Who's influenced you the most in your life?" and receives an unexpected [answer](#): "My principal, Ms. Lopez." Vidal, a 13-year old boy from Brownsville, NY explains, "When we get in trouble, she doesn't suspend us. She calls us to her office and explains to us how society was built down around us. And she tells us that each time somebody fails out of school, a new jail cell gets built. And one time she made every student stand up, one at a time, and she told each one of us that we matter."

I should be more forthcoming. Brandon is Brandon Stanton, a street photographer who chronicles the portraits and lives of every day New Yorkers in a poignant and VERY popular blog, [Humans of New York](#), which has almost 12 million [Facebook](#) fans.

Long story short, Brandon visits Ms. Nadia Lopez and her staff and learns about Brownsville (a neighborhood in Brooklyn with one of the highest murder rates per capita and highest concentrations of public housing) and their school, Mott Hall Bridges Academy. They discuss the limited horizons of disadvantaged youth, that many of their students don't ever step outside of the neighborhood. They strike an idea: let's send the students to visit Harvard, even if just for one day.

An [Indiegogo campaign](#) is launched to raise \$100,000 in 18 days. In just a few hours, \$185,000. In one day, \$365,000. (Oh, at this time, Ms. Lopez is receiving bouquets of flowers from awesome humans on the internet.)

They discuss using the extra funds for a summer program, since most of the students have no structured means for learning (the summer slide). Plus, the neighborhood is dangerous, even the playgrounds and the library. In two days, \$570,000. During this time, Brandon continues to feature portraits and stories of students and staff at the Academy. In four days, over \$700,000 (from 25,000 donors). To put this in perspective, this money can pay for 10 years of Harvard visits and 10 years of summer programs.

In five days, \$1,042,820 (from 34,893 donors).

They meet again. They decide to use funds over \$700,000 to establish a scholarship fund available to graduates of MHBA and to lay tracks to continue that support in the future. The scholarship fund is named The Vidal Fund. And, the first recipient is Vidal, the boy who answered a question and inspired a global community.

So, Happy New Year, fellow humans, and welcome to 2015! May this year be good to our students and good to us.

Sincerely,
Priyadarshini Chaplot, The RP Group

P.S. This is a LIVE story. You can follow it and see all of the portraits and stories at [Humans of New York](#). At the time of this publication, the campaign has raised \$1,120,011 from 37,513 donors and counting.

In This Issue

- Statewide Spotlight | We Owe It All to Our Students
- Research | Statewide Multiple Measures Assessment Project: Developing a Model for Multiple Measures Using High School Data
- Planning | How to Manage the Paradoxes of Planning In a Planning Leadership Role
- Assessment | Assessment Commons: Resources for Higher Education Outcomes Assessment

Statewide Spotlight | We Owe It All To Our Students



Author: *Matt Wetstein*, President of the RP Group and Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Instruction, San Joaquin Delta College

A synchronicity of three events conspired to lift our collective spirits in January 2015. First, the Governor released a proposed budget that puts renewed funding into the California Community College system. The proposed revitalized funding for access, student success, equity initiatives, cost of living increases and one-time funds for deferred maintenance needs, among others, promise to make 2015-16 one of the best years for our system in a decade. This vote of confidence from the Governor comes with the recognition of our multiple missions: we continue to provide excellent access to a higher degree, workforce preparation, basic skills improvement and lifelong learning opportunities to the residents of this state.

If this vote of confidence wasn't enough, one of our esteemed graduates sung our praises in the pages of the *New York Times*. I am talking about Tom Hanks and his wonderful depiction of his time at Chabot College in the 1970s, entitled "[I Owe it All to Community College](#)" (published January 14, 2015). Mr. Hanks clearly has a soft spot in his heart for community colleges. Beyond his recognition of the great professors from whom he received instruction at Chabot, his under-rated movie *Larry Crowne* provided a wonderful representation of the diversity and strength of students who attend a community college. And besides, I think all of us would agree, taking a fictional speech class from Julia Roberts would not be such a bad thing.

At roughly the same time that Tom Hanks was walking the boards of Chabot College theaters, my mother enrolled in an associate's degree nursing program at Belleville Area College in Illinois. Having raised nine children beyond the stages of diapers, she set out on a 2-year journey to lift our family into the middle class. It was no doubt hard work. I remember doing homework at the same kitchen table with her. I know that her example helped keep the fires burning in our family's pursuit of education. I owe it all to her and my father, the mechanic/carpenter, that I got to pursue my dream of being a college student, a journalist, a college professor, and now an administrator.

Now, Tom Hanks does not just write the *New York Times* whenever he feels like it. The trigger for that opinion piece was President Obama's proposal for a national program to fund free community college access for all deserving students. While that proposal appears to be a signature piece of President Obama's last term in office, its passage in a partisan

ACCUPLACER scores did not add to the predictive power of the English models, though they did improve some math models, particularly sub-models predicting success in Pre-calculus and Calculus I at the community college.

Fourteen colleges and districts from across the state have committed to serving as pilot colleges to implement the proposed models locally. The pilot colleges have already engaged in numerous webinars and an in-person convening to discuss multiple measures assessment at the national and state levels as well as at their own institutions. The results and feedback from the pilot colleges will be used to finalize the model that will then be shared with the Common Assessment Initiative's (CAI) Multiple Measures Work Group for feedback and recommendation to the full Common Assessment Initiative Steering Committee.

If approved by the CAI Steering Committee, the model will be ready to pilot in fall 2015 by the 12 CAI pilot colleges. The next steps envisioned for the project include a statewide validation of the multiple measures model in winter 2016. Once completed, the model will be available to colleges to use as a validated assessment tool to complement the Common Assessment Initiative's testing instruments.

Additional research and analyses are currently underway to incorporate and analyze other tools for multiple measures assessment, including social-psychological variables (a.k.a. non-cognitive variables or NCVs), as well as the use of self-reported transcript data for students without California high school transcript data (e.g., international and out-of-state students).

Resources:

- [Multiple Measures Assessment Project webpage](#)
- Belfield, C. R. & Crosta, P. M. (2012). [Predicting Success in College: The Importance of Placement Tests and High School Transcripts](#). (CCRC Working Paper No. 42).
- Scott-Clayton, J. [Are College Entrants as Overdiagnosed as Underprepared?](#)
- Willett, T. & Karandjeff, K. (2014). [Stepping Up: Progression in English and Math from High School to College](#).

Planning | How to Manage the Paradoxes of Planning In a Planning Leadership Role



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

As planning leaders, we often face common and compelling tensions in the organization, such as those between the old and the new, change and stability, flexibility and rigidity, and tradition and innovation. These conundrums represent paradoxes, each of which appears to have two anchor points, and we need to know how to delicately balance the two extremes of each, embrace both

positions and benefit from the value of the opposing approaches. We will describe three of these paradoxes and suggest a few ways to think about leading breakthroughs that aid your planning efforts.

Stability<<>>Flexibility

Effective long-term organizational planning calls for stable direction and goals. "Know your mission" and "steady your course" are tenets that we live by, especially in the discipline of planning. On the other hand, especially in public community colleges in the 21st century, we need to remain nimble and be able to react to a rapidly changing economic, political and social landscape. (Think of the new "3SP" plans and accompanying funding for California community colleges, as well as the collapse of the economy eight years ago.) How do we balance the need to ensure that planning can still be productive in dynamic times?

Leadership Strategies:

- Review and revise the mission and broad goals as needed. If possible, do this on a regular, ideally annual, schedule so that assessment and change is expected and routine, versus unexpected and upsetting.
- Don't flip-flop on messaging about plans and directions. We have much to learn from public relations professionals about consistent messages. Top leadership needs to employ consistent and frequent communication about planning.

Simplicity<<>>Complexity

In order to integrate and simultaneously implement a multitude of plans and processes, and to penetrate to operational levels, we need multi-layered plans and precise coordination mechanisms--this can enable broad institutional goals to impact day-to-day practices and routines. How do we balance working collaboratively towards the same goals and ensure that the complexity required to do so is efficient and effective, versus time wasted with added layers of procedures and fruitless outcomes?

Leadership Strategies:

- To effectively streamline and coordinate planning structures, use clear and well-constructed communication vehicles, such as webpages, explicit planning materials and planning groups (members of which can extend the communication flow), as well as a consistent vocabulary for processes. Also, eliminate redundancies in planning processes.
- Obtain consent to have the added work of complexity, including some assessment and coordination, done by support staff, and ensure that professional staff have the responsibility for linking results to overall strategic direction.
- Demonstrate and make apparent the connections among the efforts and activities of individuals and units. As often as possible, communicate planning progress and successes. Promoting this dialogue and communication helps faculty and staff to appreciate and participate in the complexity and planning that is being undertaken.

Tradition<<>>Innovation

It's no secret that higher education can be resistant to change, given that its historical role was to transmit our culture to the elite of the next generation. On the other hand, we know that change today is occurring at the speed of light and students need to be prepared for a new world order. How do we ensure that planning promotes innovation and cutting-edge practices for learning, yet also maintains the integrity of our notions of what higher education represents? And, how do we calm the senses of those who are less comfortable

with the new and different?

Leadership Strategies:

- Promote dialogue about our bedrock values for higher education along with the practical needs of students and society, and avoid ideological debate and stands. Label the difference between the two and reinforce that the status quo is not good enough.
- Create and consistently communicate meaningful institutional values. For example, everyone should have a clear and shared understanding of what ideas like "student success", "student-centeredness", "learning" and "excellence" look like.

The goal of this series of planning articles in Perspectives has been to stimulate renewed conversations about planning. Feedback about your experiences with planning paradoxes would be very appreciated; please share them with RP Group's Planning and Policy Chair, Denice Inciong, at dinciong@socccd.edu.

Assessment | Assessment Commons: Resources for Higher Education Outcomes Assessment



Author: Priyadarshini Chaplot, Senior Researcher, The RP Group

For many people and for many years, the Internet Resources for Higher Education Outcomes served as a go-to space for learning outcomes assessment resources. After two decades of being carefully tended by Ephraim Schechter at North Carolina State University, its contents will now be housed in the [Assessment Commons](#) website and managed by Bob Pacheco, Director of Institutional Effectiveness at MiraCosta College.

The Assessment Commons is an online resource for two-year and four-year institutions from all accrediting regions across the country. As a repository, it contains about 1,600 links, including 500 institution sites, with some even spanning the globe. Its resources (e.g., articles, links, handbooks, glossaries, reports, institutional assessment pages) address diverse topics, such as how to:

- Assess specific skills or content
- Assess learning outcomes at various levels and in various discipline areas
- Review and select the appropriate assessment rubric
- Assess service learning
- Determine the best structure and function for an assessment committee
- Build assessment grants
- Navigate institutional review boards
- Measure the college impact
- Access enrollment, completion and earnings data
- Explore national and international organizations addressing assessment topics

It even has a sense of assessment humor! While efforts are underway to make the site easier to navigate, you can use your browser's Find (Ctrl-F) function to locate information about particular topics, since the links on the site are annotated with brief descriptions. There is a navigation bar on the left-hand side as an added measure. If you have any questions or would like to add resources, please contact Bob Pacheco at rpacheco@miracosta.edu.

Resources:

- [Assessment Commons](#)
- [ASSESS listserv](#)
- [Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education](#)

The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges | www.rpgroup.org