perspectives

RP Group | March 2014

Whether you are talking about the season between winter and summer or a metal coil or the first syllable of The Boss' last name, it's SPRINGTIME!

Springing forward, we are thrilled about welcoming 125+ research and planning colleagues from across the state at the 2014 RP Conference!

We realize that many of you are unable to attend the conference for a variety of reasons. Hydrologically speaking, a spring also occurs when groundwater, possibly collected from rainfall or snowmelt, emerges to the surface of the earth. Likewise, we have designed the March and April issues to bring a portion of the conference experience directly to you, wherever you are.

The March issue takes a deep dive into the work of the RP Award recipients. The efforts of these individuals and teams demonstrate an excellence in research and planning as well as a commitment to student and institutional success. The five articles in this issue explore each of the five efforts, including what they did, what they learned and how you might be able to apply the relevant portions to your office and/or college efforts. We also include resources that can help you further explore this work.

After the conference, we will place all session materials and resources on the RP website. The April issue will feature four of these sessions and share relevant insights and resources.

Here's to springtime, when we spring to bring the conference to you!

Sincerely,
The RP Group

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Announcements

Explore New Cost-Effectiveness Research on the Metro Academies at City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State University
Review how this model significantly improves students' time to transfer and degree while saving the college and university money over time here.

Check Out the STEPS Research Briefing Summarizing Project Findings
Explore new insights on using high school transcript data for placement of recent high school graduates here.

Excellence in College Research: Relationship of the Fall 2012 Left Lane Cohort to Enrollments, Students Success and Fall to Spring Retention

Recipient: *Keith Wurtz,* Dean, Institutional Effectiveness, Research & Planning, Crafton Hills College

In spring 2012, the Crafton Hills College Student Success and Engagement, Enrollment and Management Committee (SSEEM), a Crafton Council shared governance committee, developed the Left Lane Project (LLP), funded by the SBCCD Chancellor's Student Success Initiative Fund. The project incorporates a comprehensive, research-based approach to create clear pathways for students from application to completion.

LLP seeks to reduce the average amount of time it takes students to earn an AA/AS degree at Crafton from 5.3 years to 4 years. To do so, the LLP has implemented numerous strategies, such as a Summer Bridge Program, learning communities and supplemental instruction, and SOA3R (Senior Orientation, Application, Assessment, Advising and Registration). First implemented in Fall 2012, the program's first phase focused on transitioning first-time college students to Crafton.

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship of the Fall 2012 Left Lane cohort to enrollments, student success and fall to spring retention (i.e., persistence) to identify what was working and where Crafton could improve the program. The research design innovation used in the analysis of the Left Lane Project was the use of two comparison groups.

In most cases, research studies will often only compare a treatment group to one comparison group. However, in this instance comparisons to both groups may help to inform continuous quality improvement. Due to this, a second Left Lane cohort was identified in order to control for the services provided by Left Lane. Accordingly, any students in the comparison group who participated in one of the following Left Lane Strategies were excluded from the comparison group in order to better control for the effects of the program: learning communities, supplemental instruction and SOA3R. The second comparison group was reduced from 583 to 357, a decrease of 226 (39%) students who participated in SOA3R, a learning community or supplemental instruction.

When preparing the comparison groups, one of the most interesting findings was the number of Fall 2012 first-time Crafton students who graduated from high school in 2012

who did not participate in Left Lane, but had participated in one of the Left Lane Strategies (LLS). Thirty-nine percent (n = 226) of these students participated in SOA3R, a learning community, or in supplemental instruction. As a result, the first comparison group of incoming students had success rates that were 70% or higher. Moreover, the Left Lane students often did not have a statistically significantly higher likelihood of achieving the outcomes examined than the first comparison group, suggesting the possibility that one method for improving the LLP is to focus on ensuring that as many students as possible participate in the LLS rather than solely on the Left Lane Program.

One of the strategies for decreasing the average amount of time it takes students to complete an AA/AS Degree involves increasing how quickly students are able to successfully complete transfer level English and math. The initial results of the research indicates that Left Lane students are more likely to enroll in math and English courses in the fall, but in some instances they were not as likely to enroll in math and English in the subsequent semester and/or successfully complete the subsequent English and/or math course in the summer semester. LLP may need to require students to participate in the LLS in the spring semester and devote additional resources to services in the spring semester.

These findings have informed Crafton's second proposal to the District Chancellor. Areas of emphasis included increasing access to the Left Lane Strategies, providing more access to math sections and finding approaches to require students to stay enrolled in math until they have completed all math courses required in their educational plans.

Resources:

- Research Brief
- Crafton Hills College Fall 2012 Left Lane Student Outcomes Dashboard
- Fall 2012 Left Lane Results

Excellence in Statewide/Regional Research: Tracking Wages of California Community College Completers (Salary Surfer)

Recipients: *Alice van Ommeren,* Dean, Research, Analysis and Accountability, and *members* of the Technology, Research and Information Systems (TRIS) Division*, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Note: This article is a reprint from the February 2014 issue of Perspectives.

Last year, the Chancellor's Office released the Salary Surfer tool, making available for the first time in California, a site that allows users to examine aggregated earnings of graduates before and after receiving a certificate or degree in a variety of disciplines. Additionally, the tool provides information on which colleges offer programs in those specific disciplines.

A user of the Salary Surfer tool can view system-wide median wages two years before, two years after and five years after the earning of a degree or certificate in a specific discipline. Wages are derived from California Employment Development (EDD) Unemployment Insurance (UI) data and joined with Chancellor's Office MIS awards data. Students who transferred to a four-year institution are excluded from the numbers. In the Data Mart, the

Salary Surfer estimates are available in the "System Wage Tracker" within the "Outcomes" selection. The System Wage Tracker query tool lets you select and compare median wages for multiple disciplines and award types.

The earnings or wages of students after completing an award at a California community college has always been of interest to administrators and policy makers. With the increasing cost of education over the past decade, this interest has expanded to include students and families. Knowing the estimated earnings potential after completing an award at a California community college can be very valuable in supporting students as they decide which educational pathways to pursue.

* The Technology, Research and Information Systems (TRIS) Division at the Chancellor's Office is responsible for a full range of administrative services relating to research, accountability and management information systems. The two units in the division most responsible for the development of the Salary Surfer are the Management Information Systems (MIS) and Research, Analysis and Accountability (Research).

Resources:

- Salary Surfer website, query tool, framework and methodology
- Other student wage resources, including the Salary Surfer
- Alternative approach: University of Texas System's SeekUT
- If you have any questions, please contact salarysurfer@cccco.edu

Excellence in Thesis/Dissertation: A Conceptual Model on the Impact of Mattering, Sense of Belonging, Engagement/Involvement and Socio-Academic Integrative Experiences on Community College Students' Intent to Persist

Recipient: *Esau Tovar*, Counselor/Faculty Lead, Assessment Center, Santa Monica College

Community colleges continue to experience high levels of student attrition and low degree/certificate completion rates. Given extant literature, there appears to be a need to reexamine how interactions between students and the institution, and students and institutional agents are taking place.

The study examined the tenability of seven theoretical propositions articulated in a conceptual model, tested in the context of structural equation modeling. It also posited that supportive interactions with diverse peers, perceptions of a hostile campus climate, length of attendance, enrollment intensity, financial concerns, supportive family/friends in the transition to college and GPA might also influence persistence intentions.

Structural differences in the model were examined by race/ethnicity--not with the goal of developing a "one-fits-all" underlying model, but to identify how diverse students are influenced in their persistence intentions. The resulting conceptual model explained 20% of the variance on intent to persist for all students (n = 2,088), but differed significantly by race/ethnicity: 28% of the variance for Asian students; 21% for White students; and 19% for Latino/a students. Unfortunately, the sample size for African-American students was

too small and the model could not be examined separately for this group.

Transition-to-college support from family/friends exerted the highest effect on intent to persist across all racial/ethnic groups, followed by engagement/involvement, perceptions of mattering, interactions with diverse peers, GPA, goal commitment and socio-academic integrative experiences, albeit differing by group.

This study is the first in the literature to empirically demonstrate a causal effect between perceived institutional commitment to students and perceptions of mattering. The study also found support for an omnibus "student development and success" construct alluded to by Wolf-Wendel, Ward and Kinzie (2009).

Given these findings and the causal patterns among the factors above, a few conclusions that may guide community college administrators, instructional and counseling faculty and staff to develop interventions aimed at facilitating student development. Readers are invited to consider what approaches their individual colleges could take to address the propositions below.

At the heart of the model, is the proposition that perceived institutional commitment to students directly or indirectly impacts student perceptions of mattering, sense of belonging, institutional engagement/involvement, socio-academic integrative experiences, goal (educational) commitment and ultimately, intent to persist. The model further contends that:

1. Institutional commitment to students is demonstrated in the actions taken by the college to facilitate college transition and adjustment. This is further shown by actions and behaviors exhibited by institutional agents such as instructors and counselors in their ongoing interactions with students that facilitate student development in a positive learning environment.
2. To the degree that students perceive a high level of institutional commitment to them, and have positive relationships with racially/ethnically diverse peers characterized as close, supportive, and available, their sense of belonging to the institution is enhanced. Perceiving the campus climate as hostile owing to personal characteristics that result in feelings of alienation deleteriously affects their sense of belonging. A positive sense of belonging has the potential to influence on grades.
3. Perceptions of mattering to the college are directly influenced by institutional commitment to students and by positive interactions with diverse peers. In turn, perceptions of mattering to the institution enhances students' sense of belonging, and facilitates engagement/involvement, socio-academic integration and ultimately, intent to persist.
4. Student involvement in campus activities and engagement in educationally beneficial activities promoting leadership skill development, community service, and academically rigorous activities wields a direct influence on grades, goal commitment and intent to persist.
5. Socio-academic integrative experiences characterized by informal and supportive interactions with institutional agents--especially instructors--directly and positively impacts student intentions to persist.
6. Perceived mattering to the college, sense of belonging to the institution, engagement/involvement in educationally beneficial activities, socio-academic integrative experiences, goal commitment and grades directly influence student intent to persist.

Resources:

- [Concept Model -- Full Dissertation and Author's Homepage](#)
- Reference: Wolf-Wendel, L., Ward, K., & Kinzie, J. (2009). A tangled web of terms: The overlap and unique contribution of involvement, engagement, and integration to understanding college student success. Journal of College Student Development, 50(4), 407-428.

Excellence in Planning: Integrated Online Program Review and Budget Planning

COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

Recipients: *Barry Gribbons*, Assistant Superintendent/Vice-President, Institutional Development, Technology and Online Services and *Daylene Meuschke*, Director, Institutional Research, College of the Canyons

One of the major challenges facing colleges is the need for integrated planning. Planning at colleges is complex, involving planning for typically more than 100 departments, strategic plans, master plans and budget development. To be effective, all of these plans have to be integrated and working harmoniously. Even more important if people are going to get past planning to "doing", the integrated process has to be efficient. The magnitude of this challenge is reflected in the dozens of colleges that have received sanctions from ACCJC for lack of integrated planning.

College of the Canyon's online program review integrates department planning, budget development, and the College's Strategic Plan. Every department objective must be tied to a College Strategic Goal (via a drop down list). This enables us to exclusively pull objectives and accomplishments for the Strategic Plan from the online program review system, not only ensuring integration, but saving time as well! The budget development process is also fully integrated with department planning. Every department that wants a budget must submit it through program review. Even more importantly, every budget augmentation request is submitted through program review and must be tied to a department objective, selected from a pull down list of the department's actual objectives updated in real time. The mechanics of doing everything can be reduced to merely an hour per year, allowing departments to focus on dialog in developing plans and implementing the projects.

In developing the system from scratch, we developed and implemented specifications that prevented inaccurate information from being entered. This was especially important for the budget module. Since the collection of information was being automated, we had to ensure that inaccurate information was accidentally entered by implementing safeguards, such as using mostly pull-down menus and checking totals that are entered against prior years. However, some of the biggest challenges were cultural, requiring EVERY department to complete a program review to be able to have a budget, even at the executive level....no exceptions. Now that the system has been implemented, we no longer have to track down folks to complete their program reviews and compile the information integrating with the Strategic Plan and other planning documents. Those processes are automated. And, we even have more and more people asking to complete a program review that have never done one, probably because they want to be able to ask for money.

The online program review can serve as a model for other colleges. Several colleges have

reviewed the system, including specifications, programming, screen shots, and in one case, even the code. All colleges are unique, but also have similar challenges. Reviewing the details of integrated planning systems at colleges helps us to further refine our own planning systems helping us efficiently improve our programs and services to effectively meet student needs.

Resources:

- [Overview of Integrated Program Review and Budget Planning Process, Technical Guide, and Instructions for Budget Development](#)

Special Commendation for Excellence in Planning: From Departmental to Institutional Planning - SMC's Integrated Process

Recipients: *Hannah Lawler*, Dean of Institutional Research and *Christine Schultz*, Professor, Political Science, Santa Monica College

Our motivation for the planning redesign was to strengthen and enhance the college planning processes. We aspired to move from a planning process that was fragmented and departmental in focus, often with ambiguously defined goals, to one that is data-driven, transparent, integrated and institutional in focus. This was prioritized after our last accreditation visit in 2010, when the team recommended that the college develop a more sustainable, comprehensive and integrated master planning process.

To that end, over the past three years, our college has embarked on a rigorous redesign of our planning efforts. In order to address the visiting team's recommendation, the college has implemented the following changes:

Revision of Master Plan for Education (MPE) objectives, which are now based on institutional, program and course learning outcomes data as well as retention, persistence and success data. The data inform the recommendations that emanate from the Institutional Effectiveness and Program Review Committees. In addition, the MPE objectives now explicitly state the activities planned to accomplish these objectives and the methods to assess the outcomes of stated objectives.

Implementation of an annual program review (in addition to the existing, more comprehensive six-year review), which documents and enhances the alignment of program and unit-level planning with institutional planning, including resource allocation.

Development of a technology tool, the ISIS Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) Portal, which collects and houses student-level student learning outcomes (SLO) data. Because course-level SLOs are mapped to the core competencies of the Institutional Learning Outcomes, the tool allows the college to systematically collect and analyze the institutional data used to inform the MPE.

Through this journey, our college has learned how to connect campus efforts, engage a variety of stakeholders, leverage technology and document the planning components in a more clear and transparent way. Here are three specific take-aways:

- It is not necessary to start from scratch. We did not scrap our existing processes, but simply built on them and improved them. The experience has been far more seamless and organic.
- Our ISIS ILO Portal has been successful because it asks faculty to simply document what they are already doing. We did not ask them to change how they were assessing their course-level SLOs.
- Outcomes assessments and data collection, while often time-consuming and costly ground decision-making in an empirical foundation, thereby lending the process more legitimacy. Campus stakeholders are more likely to participate in and value assessment and goal-setting when they see that planning is based on objective criteria.

Resources:

- [Planning Model, Master Plan for Education, Purpose and Function of Institutional Effectiveness Committee](#)

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