Building Pathways to Success

Gregory M Stoup
Board President, The RP Group
Context: change and uncertainty

• New administration in DC; a different DoE

  • “Federal context for accreditation is changing”
    - Judith Eaton, CEO CHEA

• Evolving accreditation environment in California
The last few years

- The accountability demands on community colleges intensifying

  - State initiatives – a lot of them - are targeting *transformations at scale*

- A growing emphasis on demonstrating *institutional effectiveness*
California Community College completion rates over the last ten years

Definition: Completion (SPAR) – The percentage of degree and/or transfer seeking first-time students tracked for six years to determine who succeeded in completing a degree, certificate or transfer related outcome.
A response: guided pathways

We’ve started questioning traditional approaches and old assumptions about the student experience.
Our default contract with students: the course catalog

- 379 pages; 5 Chapters; 28 sections;
- 167 Programs of study; over 1,100 courses

**Intimidating terminology**

“matriculation rights and responsibilities”

“intersegment general education transfer curriculum”

“non-evaluative symbols”

“prerequisites and co-requisites”

“pursuant to Title 5 Section ######”

“variable-unit vocational...”
Lots of information = lots of (ugly) tables
We spend a lot of effort and resources preparing students to enter and maneuver our labyrinth.

- Orientation
- Assessment
- Course Catalog
- Degree audit
- College prep courses
- Etc...

\[ B = f(P, E) \]

*Behavior is a function of person and environment*

...and when we observe that behavior what do we see?

*Lewin’s equation, \( B = f(P, E) \), is a heuristic formula proposed by psychologist Kurt Lewin as an explanation of what determines behavior.*
With guided pathways we are trying to erase the labyrinth
a further response?

We may also need to start looking at our internal structures and decision-making process.
Emerging demands to produce outcomes at scale are increasingly at odds with the intent and design of the traditional college IR office.
Data reporting demands placed on colleges

1950s - descriptive information
1960s - analytic and comparative
1970s - evaluative
1980s - all of the above *plus* planning
1990s - *plus* accountability reporting
2000s - *plus* learning outcomes
2010s - *plus* institutional effectiveness

Hat tip to Erik Cooper
IR responsibilities have evolved and expanded ...

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IR job descriptions keep getting longer and longer

Yet we continue to treat these as add-on commitments
“....the community college mission has evolved considerably ... and when colleges encounter a mismatch between operations and their mission, systems begin to fragment as they try to accommodate a more diverse set of needs and great number of purposes”

A culture of evidence is not enough

“community colleges have been willing, often enthusiastic, to pilot new practices ... but these reforms have not changed overall outcomes in any substantial way”

- Davis Jenkins

We are challenged to answer new and important questions

- Which of our programs have the biggest impacts on outcomes?
- What was the impact of our equity strategy on outcomes?
- Which pilot programs offer the best scale opportunities?
…do we have the right formula?

Integrated planning + thriving culture of evidence = Institutional Effectiveness

Having the appropriate culture and robust integrated planning is a necessary but not sufficient condition for achieving institutional effectiveness.
The leadership dimension

A degree of **leadership** is required to create the appropriate context for research and planning activities and **frame** them so that knowledge gained through local research activities can **speak to institution-wide questions**.
Is there a strategic response?

The Institutional Effectiveness (IE) model is a strategic response to the need for greater leadership and direction in institutional planning and to improve the alignment of core operations including accreditation, accountability reporting, learning outcome assessment, strategic planning, institutional research and program review*.

* The Case for a Cabinet Level Chief IE Officer, AHEE (October 2015)
Emerging research on organizational design and leadership is beginning to identify the need for IR professionals to elevate their leadership roles and help shape evaluation practices and decision-making protocols to better support Institutional Effectiveness.
Some discussion at the national level

Three White Papers from Association of Higher Education Effectiveness.

Meeting the Institutional Effectiveness Challenge

By Gregory Stoup

Board President, The RP Group

An Invitation to Reconsider Institutional Effectiveness at California Community Colleges

RP White Paper
October 2016

The Challenge

The accountability demands on community colleges are intensifying. Policy makers, accreditors and the public are demanding that colleges demonstrate effectiveness at reaching institutional goals, achieve higher levels of student completion and employment, and, at the same time,
As you encounter research on effective practices today and tomorrow consider your role as collaborator and leader and the operational necessities required for implementation at your institution.
Enjoy the conference!

Thank You

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