

Community College *of* Philadelphia

The Path to Possibilities™

Achieving the Dream Core Team Meeting
October 8, 2007
M2-34, 12:00 Noon

Minutes

Present: Michael Akoto-Bamfo, Jon Brown, Stephen M. Curtis, Ramón Díaz, Linda Fellag, Sallie Glickman, Jane Grosset, Tom Ott, Pat Scoles, Susan Tobia, David Watters

Guests: Tom Smith, Bill Wenrich

Presiding: Sam Hirsch, Judy Gay

Minutes: The minutes of April 9, 2007 were unanimously approved.

Updates

Sam Hirsch distributed the 2007-2008 list of members of the Core Team.

Sam Hirsch also distributed copies of the letter to Dr. Curtis from Carol A. Lincoln, National Project Director for Achieving the Dream, informing the College that we will be receiving our letter of agreement from the Heinz Endowment for our implementation grant and giving us feedback on the proposal submitted. Sam Hirsch mentioned that the feedback suggests that we be more specific about our activities and assessment.

Review of Achieving the Dream Priorities

The Core Team reviewed the priorities in the proposal. Sam Hirsch highlighted current activities related to Priority 1 - Improve student outcomes through strengthened student support systems: Comprehensive Orientation Program and Early Alert/Intervention System. Judy Gay highlighted activities related to Priority 2 - Improve student outcomes by increasing the use of effective educational practices: Faculty Professional Development and Math Initiative.

The Core Team discussed the current activities. Team members were interested in the status of the Math Initiative. Judy Gay reported that the pilot sections of Math 017 were run in Spring 2007. The data to date does not support that the changes made had an impact. The Math Initiative is continuing during Fall 2007. Judy Gay reminded the Core Team that our data is similar to that of other institutions and that Geoff Schultz' report to the Core Team last year based on his attendance at a Math Strategy Institute suggested that, while there are a number of strategies that institutions are trying, no particular method seems to stand out as clearly beneficial at this point. Tom Ott stated that any attempt to improve outcomes needs a discussion of teaching methods. Tom Smith reported that Mt. San Antonio College in California is reporting positive initial data based on an accelerated format. Judy Gay will get information about that initiative.

The Core Team discussed faculty professional development as a strategy. There was agreement with the strategy, but the focus of the discussion was on the difficulty of measuring the impact of professional development.

Review of CCSSE Outcomes

Judy Gay reminded the Core team that a decision was made in Spring 2007 to participate in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). She thanked the members of the Core Team, particularly faculty members, who encouraged faculty to allow their classes to participate.

Jane Grosset reviewed the general outcomes. She mentioned that CCSSE is consistent with models of student engagement. Two reports (IR Report #167 and #168) will be issued to the College community. The reports show that the College had positive results on the five benchmarks from CCSSE but that there is room for improvement.

The Core team discussed ways to effectively engage the College community in a conversation about the results. As an example, there was a discussion of service learning. The College included civic participation as part of the mission but there is no system-wide attempt to integrate civic participation. How could the College address the benefits of such an approach?

Michael Akoto-Bamfo stated that students get involved when there is recognition or some incentive for involvement. He asked if there is a way to present the information from CCSSE to the student body or to the Student Government. Sam Hirsch agreed that it would be a good idea to present the information to the Student Government Association.

Suggestions for discussing the results included: building on the positive; making sure faculty buy-in to the descriptors used for the benchmarks; getting students involved in the conversation; making a special effort to engage newer faculty; disaggregating the data to look at results for particular groups of interest.

Ramón Díaz stated that faculty may need more information about the profile of students, such as was provided in the video, *Discounted Dreams* which was shown in the morning to faculty and staff. Faculty development could be targeted around topics such as working with first generation college students.

Next Meeting

The Core Team agreed that morning meetings are preferable to lunch meetings. Sam Hirsch and Judy Gay will identify a date in early December for the next meeting.

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