Framing Student Success at Riverside City College

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Keys to Planning a STEM Education Proposal

- Assemble the team
- Open the dialog
- Determine the focus*
- Gather the data*
- Develop the plan
- Design the plan implementation
- Adjust the plan
Assemble the Team

- Be as broad as possible for the early planning phase
  - If you know your focus will be on one department, get a variety of folks from that department
  - If you think you might include multiple departments, get folks from each
  - Don’t JUST include department chairs, the usual suspects
    - This is an opportunity to mentor new/young faculty in grantsmanship

- Be diverse regarding the college entities represented
  - Counseling, student services, library, tutorial services, divisional/academic dean, Vice President of X/Y/Z, Institutional Research, A&R, administrative support staff, equity committee

- Who are you missing?
Open the Dialog

- Invite the team to recommend ideas
  - Where are you not serving students well? Are there resources/access issues that interfere with student success? Where are your pressure points?
  - To a certain extent, the longer the list the better

- Solicit ideas as a group, but be sure to address your team entities individually
  - What do faculty want/need to focus on? What does students services want/need to focus on? What are the financial/physical space realities?

- You may realize you have more questions than answers at this point
Determine the Focus

- Hopefully, as you organize the ideas, you will find themes
  - Ex: access to resources (physical access, financial access, time-of-day access) is limited
  - Ex: motivation, participation, engagement is lacking/hampered/not cultivated
  - Ex: gateway course has a high DFW rate

- Be sure the focus aligns with your institution/division/department strategic plan

- Consider the urgency of the main themes

- Now you need to identify the core team
  - Be sure to include the go-to types of folks
Gather the Data

- What do you know about your students?
  - Ex: access to resources: When do they access resources? How do they access those resources? Where do they access resources? If they don’t access them, why? What resources do they access - if not the ones you want them to?
  - Ex: motivation, participation, engagement is lacking/hampered/not cultivated: Who does participate in campus activities? How did they get motivated? What kinds of outreach do you have? Is that missing a part of your population? Are you engaging them where they are or where you want them to be?
  - Ex: gateway course has a high DFW rate: Which populations are succeeding? Which are not? Can you identify a pattern from a prerequisite course/AP test?
Gather the Data

- Is there data you cannot get easily?
  - If so, how could you go about getting it, find a proxy?
- Look at the educational literature
- Institutional Research is CRITICAL and AMAZING
  - This step often takes a while. Be clear about what you want (but including IR in your discussions will allow them to help shape the request)
Develop the Plan

- You have identified your focus, you have looked at your data
- What needs to be done to change the status quo?
  - Expand hours, add tutors, rethink cohorts, professional development
- Be sure to include the appropriate administrators
  - Academic support services, business and financial services, academic affairs
  - You will need buy-in to enact your project
  - In particular, the closest administrators to you
- If the plan will impact entities not already aware of the project, bring them in
Design the Plan Implementation

- Identify metrics
  - To increase something, you must know what your current level is
  - Be ambitious, but realistic

- Think about short-term, long-term metrics
  - Short-term - these may be straightforward
    - Ex: % successfully completing a course, # attending tutoring, mean GPA after the intervention
  - Long-term - these may be trickier
    - Ex: % graduating, % declaring a major in STEM, retention as STEM majors
    - Is there something that can be used as a proxy?
**Design the Plan Implementation**

- **Identify timelines**
  - Be sure there is enough planning/design time (there never will be)
  - Think about the data you will need to collect and the institutional timelines
    - If you need IR to pull a bunch of data for you when your institution’s strategic planning is in full-throttle, it might be complicated

- **Identify partners (if not already)**
  - Define roles and responsibilities
  - If cross-institutional, administrator conference is often warranted

- **Be ambitious, but realistic**
Adjust the Plan

▪ Be prepared to make adjustments
  – The best laid plans of mice and men...

▪ There will be parts of your plan that are somewhat inflexible, but know what parts are flexible

▪ Sometimes it requires pivoting in ways you didn’t imagine
  – Remember to bring in entities that will be affected by the new plan
  – This is where administrator participation/awareness is critical

▪ Adjustment doesn’t mean failure- it means you have learned

▪ Surround yourself with smart, creative people
Thank you!

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