A joint working lunch meeting was held with the members of the Core, Data and Excellence in Learning teams.

Chuck Holbrook opened the meeting and thanked Jennie Walts for coordinating the effort and to Taylor Burton for the logo creation for the Achieving the Dream initiative. The purpose of the meeting is to show how the initiative ties into everything we are doing across the campus. The bottom line is student success. Equity is a huge issue. Students need to be brought to a level playing field to help them succeed.

Chuck Holbrook outlined the three areas of focus and then turned the meeting over to Necia Nicholas and Brian Gann to talk about the Teaching and Learning component. Necia Nicholas stated that a Blackboard shell will be created to show best practices for teaching and learning. This will be a place for instructors to share what they are doing in the classroom that is working to help students succeed. This will be broken out into division/departments.

Kenneth Kirkland spoke to the adjunct faculty piece and how best practices will help our part-time faculty experience success for students in the classroom.

Valerie Cox spoke about the FastTrack program and how it will work for fall. Starfish will be implemented this fall for all developmental courses. This is where faculty can mark a student if they are missing class, not completing assignments and/or scoring low on tests and quizzes. These names will be given to Carla Swinney and she will follow up with the students to see what they may need to get them back on track. Thalia Love stated that the cut scores have been reevaluated for Reading/English. ENR 094 has been implemented which will address inefficiencies in both Reading and English.

Brian Gann spoke to holistic advising. Assigned advising is going well. Students with assigned advisors will meet with students no less than 2 times per semester. Career services will also be enhanced for students. Man hours will be increased to help students figure out what they want to do. FastTrack is popular and students have been very receptive. 7 - 8 students have already tested out and moved on to the next level.

Steve Calatrello is optimistic that ATD will improve student success and help Calhoun increase graduation and retention rates. A delegation will visit Calhoun in late August to show how they are increasing retention through a workplace ethics program.
Another initiative is a student success center on both campuses.

Janet Martin showed the T-shirts and wristbands that will be worn at In-service. Natalie Couch and Doug Brazier outlined how the day will work and what will be different this year versus other years.

Dr. Klauber commented on the idea of the success center and how we need to expand these services to our students. This should not be exclusive to Math and English; this should encompass all areas taught at the college. It is also very important that our decisions are made based on data. The data needs to be accurate that is entered into the system so that we can rely on the data to help us achieve success. Federal funding will eventually be tied to graduation rates. This initiative will help us be ready when this comes to pass.

Dr. Fifield joined us via Skype. Technology challenges have made things difficult to talk with her. Dr. Fifield has been meeting weekly with the small group to keep abreast of how Calhoun is doing as we work towards our top three priorities. Steve Calatrello asked Dr. Fifield what data we should be looking at over the course of the year. The responsibilities of the Data Team include - gatekeepers and interpreters of the data - student success data should sit with the team and be disseminated by them. They are a "clearinghouse" so to speak for all data for the college. The team will also help the rest of the staff know what the data means. This is very important. The team should also look at an inventory of policies and practices that help students succeed or inhibit their success. Then this should be tested to see if our assumptions are correct.

The responsibilities of the Core Team would be that of a central functioning body; not only looking at data but looking at the definition of student success. The team promotes and encourages the involvement and engagement of everyone in the college community to analyze the practices that work and don't work. The team needs to gain the support and trust of other employees that are not directly involved in any of the ATD teams. The team plays a leadership role in the initiative. This team is also a liaison to the budget and strategic plan to determine if what is contained in these plans supports the ATD priorities.

Calhoun has made a quantum leap. Last year at this time, there was a lot of denial going on. The leadership is what is helping us make this quantum leap. Student success should be our top priority.

What are the typical first year pitfalls to avoid? Momentum is a big one. Just because we have the implementation plan, teams, etc. doesn’t mean that the initiative can go on "auto-pilot". This is a huge mistake. We need to live and breathe ATD each and every day.
Information needs to spread to all factions of this organization. One person tells another, and another and so on. Communication and interaction needs to be addressed soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Jennie Walts
Recorder