Achieving the Dream  
October 17, 2014  
Minutes

Attendees:

**Core Team:** Kemba Chambers, Heather Congo, Valerie Cox, Brian Gann, Debi Hendershot (Core & Data), Odessa Jordan, Tammy Kerby, Necia Nicholas, Jannett Spencer, Alicia Taylor, Jennie Walts (Recorder)

**Data Team:** Latosha Baldwin, Derek Berry, Gina Briscoe, Donna Estill, Linda Graves, Bryan Helms, Sherry Stancil, Cynthia Stephenson, Felisha Taylor

**Absent:** Rodney Alford (Data), Dr. Beck (Core), Bobbi Jo Carter (Data), Vickie Hale-Brown (Core), Janet Kincherlow-Martin (Core), Michael Kinney (Core), Carla Swinney (Core), Nathan Tyler (Data)

Ms. Taylor opened the meeting and thanked everyone for being there. Ms. Taylor discussed the issue of confidentiality and asked that all committee members keep that in mind. What is discussed in the meetings, should stay in the meetings so people will feel free to speak openly.

The teams had not met since the August kick-off but will begin to have monthly meetings – either together or separate. Ms. Taylor will be getting others involved and the Core and Data teams will provide the leadership for this initiative.

One of the best ways to fix problems is to get people involved so that the problems can be analyzed and then a strategy can be formulated to address the problems. Once a strategy has been implemented then the results need to be evaluated and revised until a solution has been reached.

Calhoun has been selected as a part of the 2014 cohort of Achieving the Dream. There were only 22 colleges selected in the nation. Being selected is quite an honor; it is similar to a national honor society. This initiative is designed to help us identify strategies that will improve upon student success.

The first step is to identify the problems and/or issues that are impacting student learning and success. Why are we losing students? What can we do to increase learning, engagement and success? It is important to begin identifying these issues and take steps to correct them because there is an accountability model coming from the Department of Education that will be attached to the funding that is received by the college. The lower the completion and retention rates, the lower the funding.

At the kick-off meeting in August, employees were asked questions related to the barriers to student success. One of the top barriers identified was a lack of knowledge of the resources or services that are available to our students. Committee members, as well as all employees at this institution, need to know more about the other areas of the college. Those areas include Admissions, Financial Aid, Business Office, Advising and Student Support Services.

Of the items identified as a barrier to student success, the teams need to determine if these are actual or perceived barriers. The best way to do that is to ask our students. Debi Hendershot is working on a survey for students to discover how they feel. The teams cannot focus on all areas at once so the top priorities
need to be identified and then data collected and analyzed. We need to find solutions that will have an impact on the greatest number of students.

Debi Hendershot reviewed the survey created with the group. There were two surveys created – one with student services questions and one with the technology related questions. The group felt that one survey would have a better response rate. The survey will be administered to a cross-section of students. Dr. Hendershot would like a pool of about 1000. This will be a hard copy survey that is completed in class to get the most participation. After much discussion, it was decided that the student survey would ask the same questions that were asked of faculty and staff at in-service. This way the group will be able to compare the results to see what is perceived as a barrier to success for the students.

Debi Hendershot also spent some time discussing the data that is being sent to Achieving the Dream. We are submitting 3 cohorts of students – 11/12, 12/13 and 13/14 academic years. A cohort is defined as all degree seeking students who entered for the first time during the fall term. The initial data reported is student demographics, high school information and application data. Each term, we will submit term records for each student such as GPA, credits attempted, credits, etc. The only students excluded from the cohort are those that are auditing classes, enrolled in non-credit courses and are currently dual enrolled in high school. Achieving the Dream will review and compare our data to other institutions and send the results back to us. Once received, we will review the results and this will help us determine where our priorities should be.

Ms. Taylor would like to begin identifying and prioritizing the top 10 – 20 barriers to student success. Ms. Taylor thinks we should develop focus groups comprised of faculty, staff and students to determine why specific issues are a problem. Once we receive the results of the student survey, we will have a better idea of what the students feel are the barriers to their success. This will help the teams to narrow the focus and being the prioritizing process.

A questions was raised about what the responsibilities were for the core and data teams. Those responsibilities are recapped below:

**Core Team**
- Identify issues (values, assumptions, structures, and systems) at Calhoun that support and impede student success.
- Identify policies and practices at Calhoun that inhibit student success.
- Set priorities, goals, and strategies to address issues.
- Engage in dialogue with students, faculty, staff, community members, etc. about results of analysis and proposed goals and strategies.
- Provide leadership in creating culture of analysis, reflection, and commitment to student learning and success.

**Data Team**
- Analyze college's performance with respect to student learning, and success, especially for minorities, low-income students, and others who face barriers
- Analyze data/information and present findings in clear and compelling way that shows what successes as well as areas needing improvement
• Seek involvement of students, faculty, and staff to identify strengths and weaknesses of policies, structures, and services.
• Assist Core Team in engaging faculty, staff, students, and community about results of analysis and proposed goals and strategies

Next Steps

Work needs to begin on a communication plan. Janet Kincherlow-Martin is working on the plan. We are not ready to communicate just yet.

On October 30th, our Data and Leadership coaches will be on campus. Ms. Taylor asked that the team members commit to being available for the whole day. Ms. Taylor is planning to arrange brief presentations from key areas of the college to give a brief overview of what they do.

It was suggested as a way to get increased participation from faculty that “Achieving the Dream” needs a face. It would be helpful to identify faculty who have a story related to how they overcame barriers to success. This will help make it real. Another idea was to highlight current student success stories.

Assignments

1. Debi Hendershot will coordinate the student survey.
2. Alicia Taylor will get information out to the teams related to the Achieving the Dream coaches visit on October 30, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Jennie Walts
Recorder