

## **Annual Reflection for Achieving the Dream – Macomb Community College**

**Due June 23, 2017**

### **Current Student Success Vision**

Macomb Community College, through its work on the Community College Research Center (CCRC) Intake Project, identified the need to strengthen its academic advising and counseling sessions with students based on student and faculty focus groups and interviews. Work with the University of Michigan expanded on the needs identified of undecided students, who require more guidance in determining what direction to go in their academic career (UM-CCC Project). The CCRC Intake Project also identified the need to provide more systematic information about the college's programs and an entire work team was devoted to updating the college catalog to provide clear course sequencing, career opportunities, and transfer information for all the college's academic programs. Since 2012, Macomb has been moving toward clearer pathways for students through the revision of the college catalog.

Separate but parallel is the long-standing need to have better institutional data about what a student's academic goal truly is. After identifying a goal during initial intake to the college, Macomb students are not required to update their academic record until they apply for graduation – if the degree they are applying for is not the program of study on their academic record, it is updated to reflect the degree they are being awarded. This is problematic on several levels, from reporting to providing ample guidance to our students. Thus, executive leadership determined in March 2014 to focus on improving the institutional program data found on a student's record as well as the exploration of "meta-majors" for undecided students. A compounding factor was the apparent disconnect found in the college's CCSSE results between student and faculty perception as it relates to academic goal setting.

An initial meeting of the Program of Study Work Team was held in May 2014 with the group meeting regularly by September 2014. Coincidentally, the Michigan Center for Student Success announced at its Student Success Summit in September 2014 that it would be providing consulting services to colleges interested in establishing Guided Pathways for its students through clearly defined program plans for all academic programs. Macomb's participation in this Guided Pathways Initiative combines the work of the CCRC Intake Project, the UM-CCC Project and the internal Program of Study Work Team, as well as aligning with the internal program review instituted by Macomb's provost in 2012 and the overall assessment of degree requirements required by accreditation.

The goals of the Guided Pathways Initiative are as follows:

- Clearly specified further education and employment goals for every program
- A full-program curriculum map with a default semester-by-semester sequence (full and part time) of courses to complete the program
- Areas of interest or "meta-majors" to help entering students choose a program of study
- Identification of exploratory courses that can be taken to assist students in developing a better understanding of the different areas of interest or "meta-majors"
- Identification of critical courses and other milestones students are expected to attain to increase the likelihood of completion and success in the chosen field of study
- Program learning outcomes aligned with the requirements for success in further education and employment, with necessary assessment strategies in place

- Policies for intentional advising at intake to assist students in selecting a program that is right for them
- Policies to provide timely feedback to students when they meet benchmarks or get “off track” in their selected program

### **Systemic change priorities that help institution achieve this vision**

1. *Creation and implementation of user-friendly, interactive, online catalog:* As an extension of the catalog redesign aspect of the CCRC project, Macomb purchased Acalog, which enabled us to provide clearer, consistent and timely program path information for students. Implementing an electronic catalog (Acalog) was a necessity in order to implement features such as part-time and full-time sequences by program, etc. In May 2017, the College Board of Trustees approved purchase of Acalog’s curriculum management system.
2. *Student verification of academic program:* An important part of helping students succeed at Macomb is making sure that they stay on their program path. If they deviate from that path, interventions made sooner rather than later will help to minimize time to completing a credential. To that end, we are instituting a program verification “check-in” for students prior to registration. We are currently testing an IT solution developed by colleagues at St. Clair County Community College. The hope is to go live with it in Winter 2018.
3. *Focused interdepartmental undecided student exploration:* As an extension of work with the University of Michigan, Macomb is working to further align undecided student exploration between counseling and career services. Information sessions were created and provided for undecided students, to assist in their understanding of the ten “areas of interest” included in our guided pathways. These sessions are now offered regularly on both campuses.
4. *Assessment and alignment of counseling and academic advising services:* In the future, Macomb plans to undertake a full assessment of counseling and academic advising services. The goals are to determine how best to assist the various categories of students (undecided, decided, transfer, academically underprepared, academic probation, etc.), as well as how best to work with those students who are not staying on their program path. This project, still in its infancy, will begin with strategic planning with faculty to create the best environment for this work in the future.

### **Key metrics used to measure progress on achieving the vision**

1. Data from Institutional Research regarding “time to completion”: Current data reveal a wide range of completion times, from less than seven days to more than 20 years. This is due to inaccurate program data on student records. As the program verification solution mentioned above is implemented, the more accurate program data is expected to be helpful in verifying that students are following the program declared on their records.
2. Data from students’ assessment and evaluation of online catalog will be used to determine if the newly designed catalog is successful in providing the intended user-friendly, student-centered experience.

3. Data on 17 strategic metrics included in the College's "dashboard" will be used to track progress relating to the College's goals of increasing the attainment of credentials, increasing transfers, stabilizing enrollment, increasing the pace of student progress, and increasing readiness.

## **Progress Update**

### **Strategy and Planning**

*The alignment of the institution with the umbrella goal of student success and the institution's process for translating the desired future into defined goals and objectives and executing the actions to achieve them.*

### **Progress**

Macomb's planning philosophy is forward-looking and responsive to its changing environment. The *College Planning Process* document, approved by the Board of Trustees in March of 2016, is the result of more than a year of college and community-wide engagement and outlines the way in which the College fulfills its mission. It articulates shared institutional priorities, establishes the overall direction for the College and provides a framework for annual operational planning across the organization, including the allocation of resources. Information collected throughout the process provides a foundation to explore the institution's future direction and serves as the basis for identifying our institutional priorities, strategic goals and objectives. In March 2016, the Board also approved the College's Institutional Priorities which will guide our planning activities over the next several years. They are Student Success, Efficiency and Effectiveness, and Community Engagement.

### **Challenges**

Effectively using the large amount of data that is currently collected to assess performance, inform continuous improvement initiatives and drive decisions is a challenge. Macomb is participating in the VFA which will be helpful for future comparisons of some higher-level data, but lower level operational data is required to drive change. College leadership has developed a dashboard/scorecard to enable more effective use of data. The current thinking is to have an external dashboard that addresses higher level performance such as completion and persistence, but we will need an internal dashboard to effectively share lower level data required to more closely monitor intervention results.

Another challenge is keeping a handle on all the moving parts that make up student success at Macomb. Creating the Student Success Council has gone a long way towards helping us do this more successfully. In addition to making sure that a range of voices is heard at the table, it is also vital to ensure that all faculty, staff, and administrators understand their unique contributions to student success.

### **Leadership and Vision**

*The commitment and collaboration of the institution's leadership with respect to student success and the clarity of the vision for desired change.*

### **Progress**

Since becoming president in July, 2008, Dr. James Jacobs has fostered a culture that embraces student success. Following his initial strategic planning process, student success has been reinforced as the college's primary institutional initiative. Throughout his presidency, Dr. Jacobs and other senior staff have made student success our most important initiative and have developed short and long-term operational goals to support student success. These efforts have helped enculture student success

throughout the college. After nine years of effective leadership, on July 1, 2017 President Jacobs will be retiring and the college will experience a leadership transition.

While leadership transition can cause upheaval and radical changes in the strategic direction of a college, that will not be the case at Macomb. The incoming president, Dr. James Sawyer, has served at Macomb for 15 years. Prior to assuming the presidency, Dr. Sawyer served as Provost and Senior Vice President for the Learning Unit for eight years. In his role as Provost, he has been integrally involved with strategic planning and has been a leader in the college's cultural transformation from student access to student success. Dr. Sawyer supports student success as the college's primary institutional initiative. He has demonstrated this support through numerous presentations externally and internally as well as a variety of initiatives he has led or supported.

### **Challenges**

A presidential leadership transition brings many challenges. Some of these will be mitigated, since the new president already possesses an in-depth knowledge of the college and its culture. While student success will remain the college's primary institutional initiative, Dr. Sawyer will have different thoughts and ideas how the college should go about fulfilling that vision.

Communication is always important, particularly during a presidential transition. Dr. Sawyer will need to emphasize the importance of student success both internally and externally and reinforce the college's vision for student success. Faculty and staff will need to be reassured that we will continue to transform our culture to be more student-centered, further supporting student success.

Communication at a large college such as Macomb is always challenging. Dr. Sawyer and senior leadership will need to create and seek opportunities to emphasize student success. We have made progress sharing student success information through the Student Success Council Communication Team. The web page they manage includes progress on success projects as well as other information relevant to student success.

Another challenge will be "on-boarding" a new provost. As head of the academic unit, the provost plays a critical role in the college's student success efforts as an institutional thought and change leader. It will take some time for the new provost (who has not been selected yet) to become familiar with college and build the relationships necessary to lead institutional change.

### **Equity**

*The commitment, capabilities, and experiences of an institution to equitably serve low-income students, students of color, and other at-risk student populations with respect to access, success, and campus climate.*

### **Progress**

In 2015, the college launched the Macomb Diversity Project. This work has honed in on student transitions, retention and persistence to address the academic achievement gaps among Macomb's students, enhancing mentoring and other initiatives to increase student engagement and foster a sense of belonging on campus. These efforts have led to increased student persistence.

In the 2016-17 academic year, the mentoring project targeted the men's basketball team, which has historically had poor academic performance, and students in CSSK courses, who are typically first-time students with three developmental placements. The men's basketball team's academic progress far

surpassed that of past teams with no academic ineligibility from the fall to winter semester (first time in known history) and an increase in average GPA from 2.3 to 2.9, surpassing the overall student body GPA for the first time in known history. For the CSSK students who participated in mentoring, persistence from fall to winter was eight percentage points higher than that of the non-mentored population.

Student conversations with administration have been coordinated in partnership with Student Life and Leadership and were held at both South Campus (April 2016, September 2016, March 2017) and Center Campus (November 2016 & April 2017). Administrators from a variety of areas, including the President's Office, Provost's Office, Dean of Student Success, and Arts & Sciences, participated. Students had an opportunity to interact with administration to offer ideas, opinions, and be heard.

Staff has been given additional training on ways to connect with students through universal themes and "real talk" pedagogy developed by Dr. Paul Hernandez, with scenarios gleaned from the student focus groups conducted in Fall 2015. There was a session for Counseling and Academic Advising in September 2016 and for front line support staff in March 2017. Additional training is planned for June 2017.

Outreach to new students receiving Early Academic Alert letters in their first semester at Macomb increased persistence for those who received personal phone calls by 15 percentage points from winter to fall and 10 percentage points from fall to winter.

Externally, collaborative connections were expanded with the following organizations: One Macomb, Hispanic Coalition of Macomb, and the Macomb County Ministerial Alliance. A Welcome Summit for Detroit Promise Scholars was held at South Campus in September and November 2016 to help connect scholars to other students and staff, in addition to providing academic, career, and social support.

The data template submitted with this report contains some information that is relevant here. There is a table that presents the percentage of students in various categories who successfully completed a gateway math course within three years. One of our most successful interventions within Achieving the Dream has been the development of MATH 1100 Everyday Math, an alternative to traditional college-level math for students whose academic programs do not require additional math. This course is accepted in fulfillment of the college-level math requirement by our major transfer partners. It was developed in recognition of the diversity in math aptitude, interest, and preparation among our students. The table shows clearly that success in Everyday Math, averaging over 93% for the four years reported, is significantly greater than success in MATH 1000 Intermediate Algebra, which averages around 76% for the same period. More interesting in relation to equity is the data in the first table of the last tab in the template. It indicates that the performance disparity between White and African American students is much smaller in MATH 1100 than in MATH 1000.

### **Challenges**

With a very large student population, dispersed across two campuses and a large variety of academic programs, interventions and innovations are likely to touch only a small proportion of our students. For example, even though students who take Everyday Math are incredibly successful, only about 15% of the 2013-2014 cohort took this class rather than Intermediate Algebra. The intervention we designed to impact persistence is our college success skills course, but only the incoming students with three developmental placements are required to take it. This is a small proportion of the student body, so the impact on overall persistence is negligible, as shown in the persistence table in the data template. Similarly, the projects and programs described above touch only a small number of students.

## **Data and Technology**

*The institution's capabilities to collect, access, analyze, and use data to inform decisions, and to utilize and leverage technology to support student success.*

### **Progress**

In recent years, the College *has enlarged the Institutional Research (IR) office by two full-time professionals* to better enable the office to keep up with the increasing demand for useful information about its students and their success. The College has *invested in new data analysis and presentation tools*, namely data mining software and data visualization tools. These tools are highly useful in a large college, with a data-rich environment in which to analyze student progress and outcomes.

*Faculty and administrators have high demand for student-related data* to support decision-making regarding both academic programs and student services. There is a greater understanding across the institution that the collection, analysis and use of student data can improve college programs and services, thereby improving the college's effectiveness.

The College *maintains over 2,800 computers for student use* and has approximately *400 mediated classrooms*. The Communications and Information Technology (CIT) department operates a *service desk* to support students, staff and faculty with college-issued technology, including computer systems and mediated stations that contribute to the educational environment.

The *Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)* provides support to faculty and students who are participating in web-enhanced, hybrid and online courses. The CTL supports Macomb's Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas. The CTL provides comprehensive support to faculty with building online courses/sections and utilizing the system. The CTL has also designed an Introduction to Online Learning module that students must take prior to enrolling for an online course that helps ensure that they are positioned for success.

### **Challenges**

The State of Michigan's *decentralized higher education system* renders data sharing across institutional levels difficult. Community colleges cannot receive data from high schools unless the student prompts the sending of a transcript. Universities cannot receive data from community colleges without a student formally sending a transcript. And no institution can directly receive workforce data (employment and wages) from the State about their former students and graduates. This greatly hampers the institution's ability to understand and learn from their students' and graduates' transfer success and workforce outcomes. It also impedes our ability to evaluate and improve our programs based on student success.

Each year we experience *growth in the demand for data from governing bodies and other external organizations* seeking student performance information. Most of the work performed in the IR office is done to satisfy mandatory governmental reporting and accreditation support, leaving little time for true research or communication about research findings to the college community. Achieving the Dream's decision to utilize National Clearinghouse data helps reduce the proliferation of data reporting.

Within the College, the *IT department struggles to meet the demands* of faculty and administrators, because of difficulties in filling open positions with qualified applicants.

## **Engagement and Communication**

*The process of enabling key external stakeholders, such as K-12, universities, employers and community-based organizations, and internal stakeholders across the institution to participate in the student success agenda and improvement of student outcomes.*

### **Progress**

The College was fortunate to have five distinguished community representatives serving on the Presidential Search team. They were:

1. Caroline Altman Smith, deputy director of The Kresge Foundation's Education Program. She supports the team's domestic grantmaking, which funds higher education institutions and national nonprofit organizations that work to help more undeserved students enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Before joining Kresge in 2008, Caroline served for five years as a program officer at the Lumina Foundation in Indianapolis where she worked to create opportunities for low-income, minority and first-generation students to enter college and complete their undergraduate degrees.
2. Michael DeVault, Macomb Intermediate School District Superintendent, who has served in this position for approximately 25 years. Previously, he served as an accounting teacher, high school principal, and personnel director, and he has extensive experience in special education, operations and finance, and small-business operations. He initiated the successful Early College of Macomb program with Macomb Community College, which is the largest in the State of Michigan.
3. Eugene (Gene) Lovell, President and CEO of First State Bank, which is a Michigan-based community bank serving the southeast Michigan region. It is a full-service bank with 11 branches and a loan center located in Macomb County. Gene began working at the bank in 1991. Prior to serving in his current capacity, Gene served as Chief Financial Officer of the bank; he has been President and Chief Executive Officer since 2008.
4. Barbara Rossmann, President and CEO of Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals since 2004. Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals is among Macomb County's leading employers and health providers, with nearly 3,000 employees, 900 medical staff members, an acute care hospital with tertiary level services, an inpatient behavioral health facility and an extensive regional ambulatory network including six health centers. With annual net operating revenue of approximately \$400 million, Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals is the second largest operating unit of Henry Ford Health System, recognized as a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient.
5. Tim Tarczynski, who has served as the Deputy Chief of Staff of Human Capital, G1 for the U.S. Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command (LCMC) at the Detroit Arsenal in Warren, MI, since 2008. He is currently responsible for the strategic human capital management of over 8,000 civilian teammates and over 200 soldiers located in a hundred different sites across the world. He also serves as the Chairman of the Detroit Federal Executive Board representing the collaboration of over 25 federal government agencies and 33,000 federal employees in SE Michigan.

For several years, the College has been developing policies and procedures to support an Institutional Review Board (IRB). One of the federal requirements is to have an external member, from outside of the College. Macomb is fortunate to have Robert A. Martin, PhD, a local educational consultant and former chief of staff of Utica Community Schools, serving in this capacity. Dr. Martin brings years of rich and varied experience at all levels of education to the Board.

In 2015, the Kresge Foundation granted funding to Macomb for a project on transfer student success. The College worked with the Community College Research Center (CCRC) and 14 key four-year transfer institutions within the state of Michigan to obtain data on Macomb transfer students from key transfer destinations and conduct analyses on transfer students' characteristics, enrollment patterns, and

outcomes. They have reviewed the results, discussed potential collaborative approaches to enhance transfer student success, and begun a planning process to implement those approaches. The final reports and a “playbook” to support implementation at institutions across the country will be available in summer 2017. They have [presented the research](#) at several conferences, to assist similar colleges in working through this process at their own institutions, including:

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS CONFERENCE - February 16-17, 2017, Detroit, MI

DREAM - February 21-24, 2017, San Francisco, CA

LEAGUE FOR INNOVATION - March 12-15, 2017, San Francisco, CA

MACRAO SUMMER SUMMIT – June 15-16, Midland, MI

AACRAO TRANSFER & TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE - July 9-11, New Orleans, LA

MCCA ANNUAL MEETING - July 27-28, 2017, Mackinac Island, MI (Not yet confirmed)

At Macomb’s University Center (UC), one of the first community college-driven initiatives in the nation to provide access to bachelor’s degree completion and master’s degree programs, twelve “partner” institutions offer students an opportunity to complete a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree in over 75 programs. Annually, more than 4,500 students are enrolled at the UC, pursuing bachelor, master’s and doctoral degrees in fields from business, computer science, and elementary education to engineering, health services, and counseling. And roughly 150 students in Michigan State University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine are in residency or take classes at the UC; this is the nation’s only medical school on a community college campus. Furthermore, an important aspect of the UC is the University Partner Advisory Council (U-PAC) which is designed to facilitate and enhance collaboration with our 4-year partners. This group of outstanding leaders in higher education is charged with exchanging ideas and strategies as it relates to curriculum, enrollment, successful transfer, student services, and community/economic impact.

### **Challenges**

Engagement is individuals working together. Bringing people together in time and space becomes more challenging as more groups are added to the mix. It takes creativity and open-mindedness to surmount the challenges. For example, when the College was first organizing the Student Success Council, we decided to meet twice per semester, on Friday morning when the fewest classes are held, and on Fridays that were not already reserved for meetings of other campus organizations and committees. The application distributed to all members of the College community included information about meeting dates and times, and asked applicants about their availability. Another approach is reflected in the transfer study. As each report in the project is released, webinars are held to enable participating institutions to have as many individuals as they would like hear the results.

Additionally, successful engagement depends on strong relationships. Macomb Community College is fortunate to have dedicated partners among K-12 institutions, four-year colleges and universities, employers, and community-based organizations. Without their engagement with the College, initiatives such as the ones described above would not be possible.

### **Teaching and Learning**

*The variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic and non-academic supports strategies designed to facilitate student learning and success.*

### **Progress**

*The Reading and Writing Studios, which opened their doors to students in July 2015, have been a wonderful addition to student support services. With locations at both South and Center Campuses,*



“The Studios” offer appointments on-campus and online for one-on-one and group sessions, as well as workshops and class visits upon request. Between July 1, 2016 and June 22, 2017, 4875 sessions were held with 1420 different students. This year The Studios also increased their in-class outreach. It is significant that the Studios have been institutionalized, folded into the budget, to ensure continued success.

In September 2016, the College began to use ACCUPLACER for course placement beginning in winter of 2017. ACCUPLACER was used for all intake in Winter 2017, including for selective admission program applicants. The Write Placer test has enabled more students to place directly into college-level English. The test is also more robust for ESL students, due to the questions on the front end that direct each student to the appropriate level of testing.

In June 2017, the College admissions area started using Recruit to support the admissions process. The data provided by this system will be critical in helping personnel understand how to connect each incoming student with appropriate College resources.

### **Challenges**

The biggest challenge to innovation in teaching and learning is the isolation of faculty. There are “pockets” of innovation throughout the campuses, but there is not a process for surfacing these, determining their potential usefulness in other areas, and assessing their impact.

### **Policies and Practices**

*The institutional policies and practices that impact student success and the processes for examining and aligning policies and practices to remove barriers and foster student completion.*

### **Progress**

Macomb has a *practice of making decisions informed by data*. In the past, the College has reported on the detailed process that led to the development and implementation of a new policy requiring students with three developmental placements to take CSSK 1200, the College Success Skills course.

There are two policy-related changes under consideration at present. The first is *offering our students a payment plan beginning in Fall 2018*. The cross-functional committee behind the proposal did extensive research and found that 26 of 28 community colleges in Michigan currently offer student payment plans. Most payment plans allow students to pay into the semester, which would be a process change for Macomb. This would be a low-risk endeavor, as participation levels at other community colleges are low (an average of 5-15% of students enrolling). A payment plan would provide flexibility for students; bridge the gap for those who apply late for financial aid, are awaiting award, or impacted by financial aid regulations; and bridge the gap for VA students who are awaiting benefits. The committee identified several items for consideration as decisions are made regarding a payment plan:

- Structure payment plan so the student is financially vested with the college at the start of the semester
- Collect full payment before the next semester registration begins, except for spring summer/fall overlap
- Selection of a third-party payment plan servicer to administer the plan by key stakeholders, including, but not limited to Financial Services, Cashier’s Office, Financial Aid, and CIT
- Plan must integrate with the Ellucian student AR and Financial Aid modules, and offer e-check and storing of credit card number

- Payment plan terms and conditions must be developed
- Marketing and advertising of the payment plan
- Implications of new plan: modified reports and system processes; de-registration report/process and prior term balance holds; partial pay protection in the de-registration process; reevaluate the VA process
- Necessity of Board approval for the changes in “Terms of Payment”

The second proposed policy change, concerning *early fall registration for current Macomb Community College students*, was also developed by a cross-functional committee. Potential benefits of this policy change are as follows:

- Current students would secure their fall class schedule prior to leaving for the summer
- Counselors and Academic Advisors would be able to focus on new student advising sessions for fall registration during the summer
- Academic areas would be able to prepare for additional class offerings (online/ground) and the hiring of adjunct faculty in a timelier manner
- Reduced stress on the registration system during the summer months
- Longer time to pay for classes prior to the tuition payment due date

The committee identified several items for consideration as decisions are made regarding early fall registration for current students:

- Availability of Records & Registration staff
- Customization of the registration statement
- Transmittal dates for financial aid disbursements
- Alternative solutions for the current automated balance hold rules in Financial Services
- Possibility of opening multiple sessions of Web Advisor to allow for concurrent Spring/Summer and Fall registration
- Earlier Board approval of new tuition rates to allow creation of Fall billing tables before registration begins

### **Challenges**

Our practice of making decisions informed by data faces the challenge of resources. Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data requires personnel with the expertise and time to devote to the projects, as well as appropriate software tools.

Our practice of depending on cross-functional teams to work on complex issues such as the policy changes described above is challenged by the need for coordination. It may be relatively easy to schedule a meeting of members of one department, but finding a time in which individuals from different campuses, departments, and areas can meet is a significant challenge. While coordinating meetings with stakeholders from around the college is challenging, it is important to do so to arrive at better collaborative decisions and gain broader acceptance by the college community. It is vital to identify the right coordinator to move the work forward.

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