

Capital Community College -Achieving the Dream Initiative Progress Report: August 2006- September 2006

During this period a number of activities were accomplished. The action plan for this period included restructuring of the Core Team by introducing a new committee of Team Leaders to enhance productivity, amending the priorities and strategies, realignment of the budget, and beginning the first stages of implementation. All activities were successfully accomplished.

Development of the Team Leaders Committee

It was determined that the most effective way to commence the implementation phase of Achieving the Dream was to organize into several strategy teams. Each of these teams having responsibility for initiating the revised identified strategies connected to the three priorities: 1) Increase success rates in developmental mathematics, English, and ESL courses for all students and reducing the achievement gap impacting Latino/a and African American Students; 2) Improve term to term retention rates of all students, particularly Black and Latino men and other underrepresented groups; 3) To enrich the college's and student's engagement with the community by enhancing service learning opportunities. The Data Team Leader and the Communication Team Leader also participated on this committee to provide each Strategy Team Leader with support.

During the month of July the Team Leader met with each Team Leader individually to review the priorities and discuss the implementation phase. To advance AtD objectives the Team Leaders are charged with directing the implementation of the strategies, reporting out to the Core Team, and maintaining budgets by creatively accessing additional funding resources to augment funding when necessary.

In order to record and maintain progress for each priority the Core Team Leader distributed a template that will establish a time line for each activity planned during the four-year implementation phase. Team Leaders have agreed to complete this time line by December 1, 2006 at which time the Core Team Leader will submit them to the President and AtD Coaches for review.

PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES- REVISIONS

To begin focusing the priorities and strategies the Team Leaders met with the Core Team Leader each Wednesday of the month. The objective of these meetings was to realign the priorities with the budget and tailor the strategies to complement the data presented within Capital's AtD proposal. With the support and feedback of the AtD Coaches who visited with the Team Leaders in August and September, the Team Leaders began the process of realigning the strategies, rephrasing each Priority and drafting a new priority, specifically Priority: 3. The basis for this change was to support the data outlined in the AtD proposal and to reflect the commentaries noted by the AtD Coaches and MDRC.

Outlined is the amended work plan with the rational for each, which prompted these amendments.

PRIORITY: 1-

Focus: Developmental Studies

Increase success rates in developmental mathematics, English, and ESL courses for all students and reducing the achievement gap impacting Latino/a and African American students

Strategy: 1

To provide faculty with professional development workshops focused on Learner Centered Methodologies (LCM).

Rationale for revision

This strategy previously focused on "creating a centralized Developmental Education Program". Although, the need for a centralized program is present within the institution, the revised strategy will support the new centralized Developmental Education Program, which the college has embraced.

Strategy: 2

To implement research based best practices for mathematics, ESL and English education.

Rationale for revision

This strategy previously concentrated exclusively on providing professional development workshops that focused on learning centered methodologies for faculty teaching developmental English, which is now Strategy 1. This strategy now supports Strategy: 1 above by implementing the research based best practices.

PRIORITY: 2

Focus: increasing retention rates and success rates in gateway courses, specifically Black and Latino males.

Improve term to term retention rates of all students, particularly Black and Latino men and other underrepresented groups.

Strategy: 1

To improve term to term retention rates of all students, particularly Black and Latino men and other underrepresented groups.

Rationale for revision

Previously this strategy focused on "improving the college's academic advising system". The AtD proposal did not provide a data collection mechanism that can be utilized to collect data on a yearly basis to support this strategy. Although, academic advising was removed as a specific strategy it is an integrated component which supports retention within this priority and remains within the overall structure of the outcomes for AtD.

Strategy: 2

Improving retention and student success by focusing interventions on gateway courses

Rationale for revision:

This strategy previously focused on “developing a mentoring and student activities program specifically targeted for men of color”, this strategy was reassigned to Strategy: 1 (see above). The revised strategy is supported by the data presented in the AtD proposal, which indicates that minorities and other underrepresented groups are less successful in gateway courses¹. This strategy will focus on gateway course to increase retention rates within this sector of the institution.

PRIORITY: 3

Focus: Enhancing community connections through service learning opportunities to increase retention and student success rates

To enrich the colleges and student's engagement with the community by enhancing service learning opportunities.

Rationale for revision

This section was the only priority that was completely revised and is still a work in progress. Previously, Priority: 3 focused on engagement of learners. This was expanded to include a service learning component to enhance community connections. This revision reflected recommendations made by the AtD Coaches and the feedback from MDRC's report, which noted that Capital's proposal lacked a community engagement component. The recommendation to establish a priority that focused on community engagement was combined with the understanding that AtD objectives focus on enhancing success rates in collaboration with the current initiatives within the institution.

Priority three will work with the established institutional initiatives such as, Strategic Planning; the new academic advising model; the creation of a Developmental Education Division; the Assessment Committee; Service Learning; and expansion of community connections to enhance and support these initiatives. This collaboration between AtD and other institutional initiatives will augment and help to drive institutional changes that will increase student success and enhance the institution's external connections.

Strategy: 1

Build and sustain relationships with the community to enhance student involvement.

Rationale for revision

Previously this strategy was focused on improving the first year experience by incorporating learner-centered teaching methodologies into the classroom with initial focus on first year developmental courses and subsequent expansion to gatekeeper courses. The focus on incorporating learner centered methodologies in the classroom was reassigned to Priority 1: Strategy 1. The focus on gateway course was reassigned to in Priority: 2 Strategy: 2.

¹ Capital AtD Proposal, May 15, 2006 pg. 4

Strategy: 2

To help strengthen and expand service learning opportunities and community engagement

Rationale for revision

Previously this strategy focused on connecting gateway courses to tutoring and support systems and expanding on Learning Community themes. The Title III grant supported Learning Communities, which are now institutionalized and continue.

Enhancing service learning by expanding community connections will enhance professional opportunities for students, provide faculty with professional development activities that focus on embedding service learning within their curriculum, and enhance institutional partnerships.

REALIGNMENT OF THE BUDGET

To reflect the revisions to the priorities, the Team Leaders began the task of aligning the priorities with the budget (see attached). Keeping to the proposal and Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) request to ensure that professional development, faculty releases, and consultant monies were integrated into the budget the Team began the task of realigning the budget. With the input provided by MDRC the Team Leaders established a budget which was clear and reflected the institution's commitment to support AtD initiatives. Software funds were increased to support the purchase of software to enhance assessment and support developmental English, ESL, and math courses. MDRC's suggestion to increase funding for an outside evaluator for year three and four was also employed.

ACHIEVED ACTIVITIES

Priority: 1

The ESL Strategy Team developed professional development activities that introduced adjuncts to the AtD work plan; reviewed the collection of data; invited discussions that included consideration of keynote speakers to enhance curriculum development; and distributed materials presenting learner centered methodologies. A professional development workshop facilitated by strategy team members was held. The workshop focused on expanding adjunct's repertoire of instructional approaches and techniques. During this workshop a survey to assess current instructional practices was developed. The survey was distributed to all ESL adjunct instructors and is currently being tabulated.

Math faculty designed a grading schema during the summer and spring term of 2006, which was used to gauge overall student comprehension of mathematical concepts. This data was used to design a professional training workshop for tutors working in the college's Academic Support Center. The workshop focused on enhancing the effectiveness of the tutors and increasing the number of students who utilize the Math Center. Math faculty created a series of workshops entitled, Math Teachers Count. The workshops are focused on math concepts that previous assessment tools indicated were of concern to students and are open to all students throughout the Fall 2006 term.

The English Team Leader's committee met with the Director of the Learning Center to discuss creating writing conferences for English 101 courses to enhance student's productivity during tutorial sessions. These writing conferences were implemented beginning in August 2006.

A workshop entitled, "Student-Centered Teaching Strategies" was held in September for English adjunct faculty. Selections of keynote speakers were established to provide English faculty with topical workshops that focused on best teaching practices for developmental English. These workshops will take place, November of 2006.

Developmental math, ESL, and English strategy teams are currently in the process of reviewing software programs. One specific software program of interest is PLATO, a skills enhancement software program that will provide student's with an additional mechanism to expand on their knowledge base of English, Math, and ESL. PLATO is currently being utilized by two colleges within the system with success.

After review of the strategies, the Team Leaders wanted to establish a clear connection to the college's Academic Support Center. The Director of the center was invited to recommend software that would track student's use of the center and their successful completion of required sessions. The recommendation was to purchase Tutor Trac a software system that tracks student's use of the tutorial services. Tutor Trac will allow strategy teams to track student's use of tutorial services and maintain data that can be utilized to assess the effectiveness of the AtD strategies. Tutor Trac was purchased in conjunction with the Academic Support Center and will be used to track students. Implementation of the Tutor Trac system will begin during the Spring 2007 term.

Priority: 2

The Black and Latino Male Strategy Team first met in August and established a general philosophy to address Priority: 2 and to ensure the team began unified in purpose with a full understanding of the priority and associated strategies. The team determined that all actions must be direct and hands on with constant follow-up. To establish a point of contact, a position for a Coordinator of the Black and Latino Male Resource Center was established. The coordinator was selected and is currently assisting students to access support services within the institution. He is also investigating mentoring and retention programs to introduce to the strategy team for implementation. To support bilingual students, a bilingual coordinator will also be hired.

During August 2006, the strategy team generated a list of 220 Black and Latino males who applied to Capital for the Fall 2006 term, but had not registered for classes. These potential students were directed to specific resources to begin the process of registration and introduced to the Black and Latino Male Resource Center.

To introduce the Black and Latino Male Resource Center to students, the strategy team hosted a reception. Twenty students were in attendance and introduced to the support services, which the resource center offered. The reception structured discussions on topics such as, accessing financial aid, time-management, and classroom success skills.

A database was created to track student's use of the resource center and to maintain contact with each student. To enhance services for student's the strategy team collaborated with the Welcome Center to track at risk students via the college's Early Alert System and the Academic Support Center to track students who are referred to tutorial services.

Priority: 3

As Priority: 3 was formed in late September, it is still a work in progress. During the month of November the new Team Leader for Priority: 3 will establish a committee that will connect with the President; Academic Dean; Dean of Student Services; Dean of Continuing Education; Program Coordinators; Division Directors; and Chairs to collect data to record the current partnerships already in place. In addition, the Team Leader and his committee will meet with Program Coordinators, Student Services, and faculty members who have established service learning within their programs and/or curriculum to collect additional data and produce a document that outlines the current service learning community connections. This data will then be used to work with the established partnerships to assess community needs and expand on service learning opportunities in gateway courses within the four-year implementation phase.

The Core Team Leader and Team Leaders continue to communicate the initiatives of AtD during college wide meetings and various forums. The web site for all meetings and minutes are posted on the college's website and the Council of Presidents has received updates from the President and Deans of the institution.

Data Team

Currently, the institution is in the process of adding a part-time Institutional Research assistant to support the Institutional Research Director (IRD) to collect and analyze AtD data. The IRD currently is researching diverse software systems to purchase that will help to collect and tabulate data in an efficient and productive manner. This will greatly improve the institution's ability to collect and submit cohort data to JBLA Associates, Inc. JBLA is coordinating the data collection effort for this project nationally.

The Data Team Leader meets with each strategy team to assist in the construction of evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of activities connected to each strategy. During the AtD Coaches visits the Data Team Leader met with the Data Coach to review the current data and to enhance our data collection system.

Communication Team

The Communication Team continues to assist in the development of presentations for internal and external stakeholders. The Communication Team "paired" a member of the team to act as a liaison with each strategy team (ESL, Developmental Math, Developmental English), and the Data Team. The purpose is to offer assistance to the teams when public dissemination of team activities is required.

The Communication Team also completed the first of an annual series of posters highlighting Achieving the Dream themes. Three successful graduates agreed to be the subjects for "Degrees Matter: Get Yours" initiative that highlights student's successes and

encourages students to obtain their degrees at Capital. A total of 18 posters were printed, framed, and displayed throughout the campus. These posters were based on the student success stories, which can be found on the college's website (also a Communication Team project) and were reformatted for use on the new AxisTV Information TV monitors that are located throughout the institution. This project will continue each year with additional alums and students added.

The Communication Team Leader participated in a telephone conference call with several round one and round two colleges from across the country. The conference call was facilitated by KSA Plus Communications, the national media consulting partner of Achieving the Dream. The focus of the conference call was to touch base with implementation efforts for the upcoming academic year, particularly in engaging the wider community with college AtD activities.

Next Steps: October 2006 – November 2006

- Establish a committee for Priority: 3.
- Firmly establish Priority: 3 strategies and begin meeting with internal and external stakeholders to increase service learning opportunities.
- Collect and analyze baseline data to submit to JBL and share with the System Office.
- Present baseline data to college community.
- The strategy team for developmental English will present workshops, focused on best teaching practices and learner centered teaching strategies.
- The ESL Strategy Team will present a workshop, " Integrating Learner-Centered Methodologies in Theory and Practice" and continue to facilitate sessions that focus on utilizing Learning Centered Methodology.
- The math strategy team will continue to host student workshops and assess the needs of the students.
- The Strategy Team for the Black and Latino male initiative will coordinate the Black and Latino conference for the Spring term of 2007 and begin to develop a mentoring and retention action plan.
- The communication team will work closely with each strategy team to enhance the visibility of their activities. They will create materials to be viewed by internal and external stakeholders. The AtD website will continue to be monitored. A new link will be established on the website, which will bring the community up to date on new AtD activities on a monthly basis.
- The data team will begin to collect and analyze data from the strategy teams to prepare to submit to JBL.
- The Core Team Leader will continue to meet with each strategy team to monitor progress; work closely with the Data Team to ensure data is collected and analyzed; the Communication Team to develop a monthly reporting system for the institution, development of presentation materials, and continuation of internal and external communication; and continue to communicate with the AtD Coaches to ensure that the progress is inline with AtD expected outcomes.
- The Core Team Leader will continue to work with Priority #3 to establish and initiate the strategies.

