



# BUTTE COLLEGE

Minutes  
Student Success Committee Meeting  
January 29, 2010  
12:00—2:00 p.m. LRC-244

- I. Lunch
  
- II. Resource Activity: Using excerpts from the resources listed below, Miya guided the group through a small group activity that involved collaborative review of the texts, reflecting on specific questions, and completing an assignment that was then presented to the larger group. (Text handouts are attached.)
  - a. Gabriel, K. F. (2008). Teaching unprepared students: Strategies for promoting success and retention in higher education. Sterling, VA, Stylus.
  - b. Cox, R. D. (2009). The college fear factor: How students and professors misunderstand one another. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
  - c. Basic Skills Handbook, <http://www.cccbsi.org/basic-skills-handbook>
  
- III. Data and Feedback
  - a. Index card feedback from November Student Success Committee meeting and from campus Student Success projects session 1/20/10 was shared with the committee. (See attached.)
  - b. Julie Withers: Presented her Focus Group Report from Fall 2009, and led a group discussion around the results. This is available electronically from the Student Success Projects office.
  - c. Miya shared examples of results reports from Zoomerang surveys and indicated this is a tool that project leads can use to easily gather and compile data. Pre- and post-testing
  - d. Other project leads: data or plans for data collection? Time did not permit discussion on this topic.
  - e. Discussion topic: ideas for future data collection: Due to limited time, the committee was asked to think about this for future discussion.
  
- IV. Updates
  - a. Report out on projects – Progress since we last met
    - i. Applied Academics
    - ii. Learning Communities
    - iii. Mentoring

- iv. Sustainability
  - v. SI
  - vi. Library Collection: Morgan reported that there will be an open house for the new BSI-funded collection (formerly known as high interest, low level reading library) on February 16<sup>th</sup>.
- b. External Evaluators' report for T3 projects pending
  - c. Need lead for Passport to Success subgroup – Discussion tabled due to lack of time.
  - d. MyBC Docs: Campus update, PPT from breakout session, conference calendar

## Group One – Excerpt from *Teaching Unprepared Students*

“Even though the odds are against at-risk and underprepared students, there are those who do make it. Not only have academic support programs improved the chances of success for at-risk students, but so have the actions of individual faculty members. In this study Blose (1999) notes that in selective institutions where faculty and staff have high levels of expectations for all their students, then ‘regardless of individuals’ prior academic history . . . students tend to respond and behave as the faculty expected in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy’ (p. 84). When professors ‘treated the students as academically capable, and held them to high standards’ (p. 84) in an environment of respect, students – all students, even those who were admitted as underachieving or unprepared students – achieve an increased level of performance (p. 84). Thus, low retention and graduation rates for unprepared and at-risk students can be improved, and faculty have a major impact on accomplishing this” (Gabriel, 2008, p. 4).

“Svinicki (2004) points out that teachers can change students’ beliefs about their ability by modeling and by talking to the students about their efforts. She writes, ‘If we focus on what can be done and on effort, rather than focusing on some inborn ability, we are both modeling an appropriate belief and encouraging students to reframe their thinking’ (p. 162). In addition, by employing learner-centered teaching methods, engaging students, and providing them with corrective feedback on their work, students will be able to chart their own progress and academic achievements” (Gabriel, 2008, p. 14).

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### Questions for Reflection: Within your group

1. In your role on campus, how do you communicate your expectations to students?
2. How could you raise your expectations of students? What specific strategies could you use?  
How would you communicate this to students?
3. How do you or can you guide students to “chart their own progress and academic achievements”? In your group, brainstorm alternate strategies for each person in their role on campus.

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### Assignment for the group:

On your poster sheet, create a training guide for any Butte College employee to encourage them to communicate higher expectations and/or support learner-centered strategies.

## Group Two: BSI Handbook, Chapter 5: Effective Practices Common to All Disciplines

Textbooks, exams, and many courses are organized around facts. This is also known as a content-centered course. It has been found that even when high-level concepts are covered, if the emphasis is on the facts alone, and memorization instead of understanding, it will not last long or be retrievable in the real world. Knowledge needs to be organized around **concepts** in order to be useful and transferred into real-life applications. Have you ever been surprised that students cannot add up the points in their classes and determine their own grades? The simple mathematics seems to elude them. This may be a case where fact-based knowledge is present, but the ability to know when to use it is absent when trying to solve a real problem. This is referred to as the “transferability of knowledge.” We find this is very common in science students who cannot determine simple proportions or ratios but have sailed through calculus. Unfortunately, most textbooks and tests concentrate on independent facts even though they are relevant to a particular discipline. Making facts stick requires conceptualizing them or putting them in context. Mathematics instructors refer to this concept as contextualized mathematics, in other words, applying mathematics to real world situations. Chapter 9 of this handbook discusses this in more detail and Appendix 4 has a sample Earth Day Math Quiz which can serve as an example of contextualized mathematics built upon concepts.

Here are a few important aspects that contribute to transfer of learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999, p 235-236):

1. A certain critical mass of information must be achieved. So while facts alone are insufficient to produce learning, learning cannot be transferred without a factual foundation. However, it is important that faculty consider that knowledge is expanding like never before in history. No matter how long a course lasted, we could never cover all of the content of certain disciplines. The implication for deep learning is to carefully consider which facts are necessary, then reduce the breadth of coverage and concentrate on depth.
2. Opportunities to use the facts, reflect upon them, and apply them to problems or case studies provide practice and expertise.
3. Students need to be given opportunities to use their knowledge in flexible situations. Sometimes the answers need to not be well-known and often times there should be multiple perspectives or answers.
4. Transferring knowledge is an active process, not a passive one.

Fulks & Alanraig, 2009. Retrieved from [www.cccbsi.org](http://www.cccbsi.org)

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### Questions for Reflection: Within your group

1. In your role on campus, give a specific example of content you expect students to learn.
2. How could you build on student’s foundational knowledge to help them learn these facts?
3. What classes, services, or other sources of information, familiar to students, can you tie in to the information you are providing/teaching? In your group, brainstorm some new strategies for each person in their role on campus to help with connections and transferring information

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### Assignment for the Group

On your poster sheet, illustrate how information students need can be linked together, to coursework, or to other commonly-known information to make it more accessible and easy to apply.

### Group Three – Excerpt from *The College Fear Factor*

“Jenn, who had reported feeling overwhelmed on day one by the coursework outlined on various syllabi, decided not to quit immediately, but she came to that decision only after hours of discussion with her family. When I asked Jenn how often, after that first day at LSCC, she reconsidered dropping out, she replied, ‘I would think that, probably, with every first test that there was.’ In other words, the prospect of submitting the first graded assignment for each course was the most terrifying part of the semester. Barbara told about her first English class, during which the instructor administered an in-class writing assignment. With a sense of hopelessness, Barbara attempted to draft some sort of response; and at the end of the class, Barbara recalled, ‘I walked up to [the professor’s] desk. I handed her my paper and I said, “I don’t know what you want written down. I have no idea what an essay is.” . . . She looked at me and I told her “I’m not coming back.” This particular example highlights the irony of such avoidance strategies, that student’s efforts to manage their fear of failure can easily lead to failure” (Cox, 2009, p. 36).

“Individuals who are familiar with what is required and who are relatively confident from the start of their success as college students are most likely to achieve success. Conversely, those who are least conversant with the norms of higher education are at a distinct disadvantage; they are more likely to feel like outsiders and to doubt their ability to fit in. Indeed, for fearful students, every interaction in the classroom and with their professors outside class holds the potential to confirm their feelings of inadequacy. Yet the same strategies that relieve their fear can prove counterproductive for completing college coursework. In particular, avoiding assessment precludes the chance of proving their academic merit. Thus the fear of failure – rather than actual failure or evidence of unsuitability – prevents full commitment and engagement. How such fears and counterproductive strategies might be countered is therefore an important consideration in promoting student success” (Cox, 2009, p. 41).

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#### Questions for Reflection: Within your group

1. In your role on campus, what opportunities exist for you to teach students the norms of the college? What opportunities exist for you to recognize gaps in student’s knowledge around navigating the system or the class?
2. How can you incorporate more or more effective assessment of gaps in student knowledge?
3. Have you had an experience “talking a student down” when they wanted to quit or were failing but turned it around? Briefly describe these experiences in your group.

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#### Assignment for the group:

On your poster sheet, create an informational flyer or email for students to help them identify programs or services on campus that are resources should they feel overwhelmed or afraid.

Feedback from final FA09 Student Success Committee meeting, 11/20/09

Questions

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How long have you served on the committee?

What's the best/most effective change you've seen as a result of the committee's work?

What is your top priority for the committee in the rest of this academic year?

Respondents and time on committee:

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Sherrie Alexander, 2 years

Monica Brown, 1.5 semesters

Jo Anne Cripe, 1 semester

Jay Goldberg, 2 years

Steve Hammond, 3 semesters

Juliet Hauser, 2 years

Eric Hoiland, 2 years

Rob Holt, 2 years

Nancy Jensen, 1 year

Laurie Masingale, 2 semesters

Clinton Slaughter, visitor

Teresa Ward, 2 years

Samia Yaqub, 2 years

Responses, "What's the best/most effective change you've seen as a result of the committee's work?"

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- Campus-wide awareness of issues/realities and efforts related to basic skills
- Progress on "passport for success" project for incoming basic skills students
- Goal-oriented projects/programs and tracking of measurable outcomes
- I know what other departments are doing related to student success. We are working together.
- Overall campus-wide raising of consciousness related to the importance of student success
- Formally identifying the need for basic skills for all of our students
- A move toward "new" research-based teaching and learning strategies, such as Applied Academics
- Working together to address student needs – e.g. Applied Academics – having faculty/staff from various areas pool ideas
- Since the beginning, I believe we had become more focused, so that our vision is more clearly defined. Pinpointing specific projects and accomplishing them has improved.
- I have only made it to a few meetings but I know you've been involved in creating learning communities and have talked a lot about 1<sup>st</sup> year experience
- I really only know about what I've been involved with . . . Applied Academics, so that's also my top priority. If I had a list of the changes we've been responsible for, I could choose.
- Introduction of On Course and growth of learning communities

Responses, "What is your top priority for the committee in the rest of this academic year?"

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- Complete the renaming of LEAD to Read and English

- Strengthening ESL program and services
- I'd like to see a prompt for students to see online when students are well below recommended assessment levels
- I would like to see the passport to services idea formulated and implemented.
- Developing a coherent and sustainable "pathways to success" plan
- Working toward implementing the Pathways to Success portion of the BSI plan through developing an ESL Resource Center (in CAS!) and hiring an ESL Learning Resource Specialist
- Complete Applied Academics
- Start work on "passport to success"
- Emphasis on creatively supporting existing tech/ed programs and support student success
- Student passport and peer mentoring
- Communicate with Enrollment Management Committee formally
- Continue w/staff development and student success-driven projects
- I would like to see more faculty education on how to support basic skills students in their classes: More "effective practices" instruction for faculty
- Support development of focused, broad-based, collaborative approach to FYE.

## Feedback from Student Success Projects Breakout Session, January 20, 2010

### Questions

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Name, role on campus

Briefly, what do you know about the Student Success Projects?

What would you like to know?

### Respondents:

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Cheryl Battles, English instructor, Sustainability lead for Basic Skills projects

Molly Emmons, English Instructor, Learning Communities Coordinator

Jay Goldberg, VESL Instructor

Suzanne Gripenstraw, LEAD instructor

Leslie Henson, English instructor

Rob Holt, Auto instructor

Angela Kraemer, English and LEAD instructor, Mentoring Coordinator

Kathie McAfee, Chair, Family and Consumer Studies

Kristin Milinkevich, Chemistry instructor

Carrie Roberson, Family and Consumer Studies instructor

Brenda Stagner, Nutrition Instructor

### Responses, “Briefly, what do you know about the Student Success Projects?”

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- Programs including supplemental instruction and student athletic tutoring to improve academic performance
- I’m mostly familiar with the ECE Spanish/English program
- I know everything about the Student Success project!
- I don’t know a lot of specifics, so that’s why I’m here.
- Continuous efforts / grant funded
- Quite a bit
- I know a bunch – but less than Miya!
- They focus on student success. ☺
- There are then and I do not know enough about them
- Since I am on the BSI steering committee, I know a fair amount about it.

### Responses, “What would you like to know?”

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- How many?
- Who is in charge?
- For which specific goals, purposes?
- Will there be an increase of funds for BSI?
- I would like more information.
- I’d like to know which projects are involved, how they got going, where the money came from, how successful they are, what’s their goals, etc.
- Other programs/colleges with applied math, reading, writing classes
- Grant(s)? Lengths?

- Will this project support a VALUES ORIENTATION?
- I want to know a bit about the various projects on campus so I can better guide my students.
- I would like to know how many strengthsquest codes we can purchase?
- Whatever you'd like to tell me.
- Projects that compliment courses in my discipline.