

Gatekeepers Report for AtD 10-11 Annual Report

Following an analysis of baseline data from the 08-09 academic year, the UHCC helped KapCC to identify 55 “gatekeeper” courses. Thirteen of those courses were in career and technical education fields and the remaining thirty-two were offered as part of the natural sciences and liberal arts degree programs.

KapCC is the largest and most complex campus in the UHCCs. For that reason, communication remains a challenge. Though more recent success data is available, discussion about student success has focused on data from 08-09. As a result, the college has been able to have fuller and more consistent discussions about gatekeeper courses, student success rates, and faculty effort. This has allowed for much broader faculty buy-in.

Recent efforts to enhance the success rates in gatekeeper courses at KapCC have been built around two innovative strategies: the Vanguard Faculty Initiative and Summer Institutes.

VANGUARD FACULTY INITIATIVE

Full-time faculty and Lecturers who teach gatekeeper courses were invited to apply for designation as “Vanguard Faculty.” These faculty would then be expected to redesign significant portions of their courses to encourage student success. Vanguard faculty were provided “the gift of time” and released from 3-4 credits of teaching duties. An initial meeting with the Dean of Arts & Sciences allowed the Vanguard Faculty to meet one another and established clear expectations for the project (Teaching Equivalency form, attached.) Four Vanguard Faculty were named for Fall 2010 and seventeen joined the Initiative the following Spring.

Past course redesign efforts have been completed in isolation and with limited impact. Vanguard Faculty were instead provided the opportunity to join one of four “Collaborative Circles for Creative Change.” These “C4wards,” led by an experienced and highly innovative senior faculty member, met regularly to stimulate discussion around pedagogy and student learning. The C4wards provided a comfortable setting in which faculty further enhanced each other’s work. C4ward cohorts often presented to one other and established important connections between faculty and disciplines which will transcend the lifespan of AtD.

The bulk of our redesign efforts will be piloted and implemented in Fall 2011 but early implementers have already seen an improvement in student engagement and academic performance. The Vanguard Faculty Initiative has also allowed the college to:

- refocus its professional development efforts on longer-term and more impactful practice,
- reemphasize the importance of good pedagogy and instructional design,
- raise the visibility of faculty who are willing to innovate and take calculated risks,
- emphasize the very significant central role that faculty play in student success,

- de-stigmatize course redesign efforts by acknowledging that some disciplines are highly challenging, and,
- build a sense of community of practice amongst disparate (but related) disciplines.

SUMMER INSTITUTES

English 100 (ENG 100) and the two World Civilizations courses (HIST 151/152) offered by KapCC suffer from similar challenges. All three courses are gatekeepers with relatively low success rates. All enroll hundreds of students each term. (In Fall 2010, KapCC offered 62 sections of ENG 100 and approximately 30 sections of HIST 151/152.) All three courses also rely heavily on a talented but transient pool of Lecturers. For these reasons, past efforts to improve courses taught by individual faculty have had very limited impact on *overall* student success. For these courses, it has been difficult to “move the needle.”

Several years ago, KapCC received funding from the National Science Foundation to implement summer institutes for science faculty. These institutes built connections between faculty, enhanced buy-in and support for college-wide student success initiatives, and have improved classroom innovation and student success. ARRA funding provided by the UHCCs will now allow KapCC to replicate this NSF “institute” model. Rather than merely copy what was done in the sciences, however, the English and History institutes will be offered in ways that are discipline appropriate and respectful of the unique cultures which have been developed in each.

The Summer Institute on World Civilizations

All of the college’s ten full-time and part-time historians have committed to participate in a formal four-day paid summer institute in which they will analyze student success rates, isolate and promote practices which encourage student success, visit and connect with significant historical sites in the community, and update their knowledge of recent developments in the teaching of world civilizations. They will enhance connections between sections by revisiting course SLOs and, as a result of the Institute, will develop assessment strategies which will be implemented across sections and faculty. A guest speaker/facilitator from the Maricopa Community Colleges will also work with the group to share best practices from Chandler-Gilbert CC, a campus with an academic culture very similar to KapCC.

ENG 100 Summer Bootcamp

English 100 is the single highest enrolled course at KapCC. It is taught by fewer than 10 full-time faculty (many who are on “release” to provide leadership to other college projects) as well as 25+ Lecturers. To further confound improvement efforts, ENG 100 is jointly administered by two separate administrative units: Kahikoluamea (student services and developmental education) as well as Arts & Sciences.

ENG 100 is one of the courses which relies most heavily on Lecturers for the delivery of instruction. The market for the most talented Lecturers is robust and consequently, the turnover of Lecturers is high. Past efforts to ensure consistency across ENG 100 sections predates most of our current Lecturers and current UH system policy does not allow the college to provide professional development for Lecturers.

These challenges have made any efforts to improve the course unusually challenging and there is minimal consistency in the teaching of ENG 100. The “Summer Bootcamp” to be offered in summer 2011 will broaden strategic planning and outcomes assessment efforts to include our ENG 100 Lecturers. Lecturers will be paid to gather for four days and will be asked to connect their classroom work to the college’s strategic plan, unit Tactical Plan, and ongoing SLOs assessment. In preparation for WASC reaccreditation, they will also work to identify “signature assessments” across sections. These efforts are designed to encourage enhanced student success in this gatekeeper course.