During their Summer 2008 Retreat, the Provost and Deans set the general strategic direction for Academic and Student Affairs work for the upcoming year, establishing a tentative main goal for Learners and deciding to use the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) focus areas as main objectives for the Learners Section of the Strategic Plan. The Provost and Deans then asked the Associate Deans to determine more specific objectives for the Learner Section of the Strategic Plan. The Associate Deans created these objectives, which were then discussed during Opening Day with faculty. During Opening Day of August 2008, faculty provided feedback on the tentative main goal (which was subsequently adjusted) as well as on the objectives, and they brainstormed ideas for possible College Action Projects. The faculty feedback was analyzed and presented to the Academic Governing Council, which then endorsed the objectives and prioritized the Action Projects. All of this information, gathered through a collaborative process involving Academic and Student Affairs faculty and staff, was used by the College Planning Council to finalize the Learners Section of the Strategic Plan. This portion of the Strategic Plan establishes the priorities for Academic and Student Affairs. One important change made by the Academic and Student Affairs leadership to the revised Strategic Plan was the addition of specific objectives for each goal. This idea was endorsed and then emulated by the rest of the College Planning Council. Below you will find the final over-arching strategic goal for Learners, as well as the five specific objectives for Learners, which are based on the CCSSE focus areas.

Learners

Strategic Goal: Grand Rapids Community College students will become successful learners and responsible community members.

Objective 1.1 – Academic Challenge. Students will undertake challenging intellectual and creative learning activities that lead to the achievement of curricular outcomes (GLOs and program-specific outcomes).

Objective 1.2 – Active and Collaborative Learning. Students will be actively involved in their education and will apply what they are learning in a variety of settings.

Objective 1.3 – Student Effort. Students will cultivate practices that lead to their success.

Objective 1.4 – Support for Learners. Students will access support services that promote success in their academic, community, and personal lives.

Objective 1.5 – Student–faculty interactions. Students will engage in activities with faculty in and out of the classroom to improve learning and persistence to goal achievement.

The ideas generated by faculty and staff and collected in the various venues noted above were classified into themes under the five CCSSE focus areas: Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student Effort, Support for Learners, and Student-Faculty Interactions. Many of the ideas became specific College Action Projects, and other ideas were determined to be “just do it” projects. Both types of projects are listed below.
**College Action Projects:** Ideas that became CAPs are being implemented, and progress is being documented through regular reporting at Deans’ Council and the College Leadership Council.

1. **Grow the Service Learning Program and create more service learning initiatives** - This has become CAP 1.2.3 - Expand service learning opportunities, both curricular and co-curricular, for students and faculty.

2. **Develop faculty advisors for majors, or a faculty-student mentoring program** – This has become CAP 1.5.1 – Design and implement opportunities for faculty to serve as discipline-specific advisors and mentors.

3. **Develop a system to provide student intervention or early alerts** – This has become CAP 1.3.1 - Develop and implement a comprehensive student early alert and feedback program.

4. **Make all support services equitable to credit and non-credit students** – This has become CAP 1.4.2 - Provide equitable support services to ensure success and completion for all students.

5. **Develop the Honors Program** – This has become CAP 1.1.4 - Redesign the Honors Program to emphasize intellectually challenging learning experiences across the curriculum.

6. **Grow the International Studies Program/International Experiences** – This has become CAP 1.1.5 - Internationalize GRCC curricula by sharing best practices, developing interdisciplinary learning themes, and encouraging faculty and student international experiences.

7. **Offer supplemental Instruction to students** – This has become CAP 1.2.2 - Create supplemental learning options to develop students’ discipline-specific learning skills.

8. **Develop and implement alternative/flexible learning opportunities** – This has become CAP 1.2.1 - Develop and implement alternative learning opportunities to meet students’ educational goals.

**“Just Do It” Projects:** The following summary of some of the actions taken by different areas at GRCC reflects how these suggestions have become a part of the institutional culture.

1. **Collaborate with K-12 and 4-year institutions on collaborative learning, best practices** – Actions taken include GRPS and KISD partnerships, as well as the Programs of Study alignment work.

2. **Host graduation receptions for students and faculty** – GRCC hosts program-specific graduations in many areas, such as Nursing. GRCC also hosts a reception for students and faculty prior to College-wide graduation in May.

3. **Create new facilities for faculty-student interaction** – This is considered as we revise the Campus Master Plan on an on-going basis.

4. **Develop cross-campus learning themes to which we could all attach** – Some examples of what has been done include: Rock the Vote, the USA Readership Program, and the Honors Program (PTK) annual theme.
5. Create large classroom spaces to facilitate collaborative learning - This is considered as we revise the Campus Master Plan on an on-going basis.

6. Share best practices across disciplines:
   - The School of Workforce Development shares best practices at WET meetings five times a year.
   - The English Department meets yearly in retreat to share best practices in composition courses.
   - The Institute for Faculty Research on Teaching and Learning is generating findings from group and individual research.
   - DLIT hosts a Technology Showcase every year where faculty members share their best practices in using technology for learning. The DLIT website and the faculty section of the Learning Academy website also feature best practices for our faculty.
   - We offer a yearly Great Teachers Seminar which is structured to have people discuss successes, help solve problems, and share teaching strategies, tricks of the trade, and innovations.
   - We have been hosting monthly Faculty Salons on various topics to allow interdisciplinary discussion of best practices.

7. Provide faculty with more information on student activities:
   - No specific action was taken during this year.
   - Next Step: Develop a link from the Student Life web page for faculty involvement opportunities.

8. Develop student study groups, class by class:
   - We offer study groups in the discipline-specific labs.
   - Group tutoring is also coordinated for specific classes (e.g. MA 003) and includes group practice and study.
   - Several Biology classes and MA 003 used study groups in the last year.
   - Next Step: Study groups are one of the success strategies to be encouraged in CLS 100 and PY 100.

9. Improve advertising of services such as tutoring, etc.:
• The Lakeshore Campus sends email communication to all faculty/adjunct regarding tutoring lab times, locations, and subjects at the beginning of the semester. They post tutoring information at all of their locations, as well.

• GRCC promotes tutoring and other services as part of the Orientation Program. We also send direct messages to students, and utilize the Stall Street Journal, bulletin boards and Bb.

10. Minimize disruptions:

• Eric Mullen and Dan Lerner are scheduled to come back to AGC and will have a recommendation to present about how to minimize disruptions to classes. This will include noise generated from outdoor campus events and other disruption concerns.

• Fire and communication drills have been rescheduled to differing days of the week to reduce drills on the same day of the week.

11. Provide better tech support:

• Lakeshore Campus: Approval was given to hire an IT Tech, which has definitely improved support.

• LRTS reorganized to increase effectiveness and emphasize a focus on customer service.

12. Offer more academic clubs:

• No specific action was taken during this year.

• Next Step: We will need to increase faculty involvement as advisors.

• Next Step: The Innovation area is working on developing a student innovation group.

13. Institute One Book One College for students and faculty:

• CLC gave the charge for Interdisciplinary Studies to develop this program to launch in Fall 2010.

14. Develop opportunities for debates:

• This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.

15. Offer situational presentations:

• This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.
16. Make learning pertinent to students:
   • This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.

17. Create interdepartmental projects:
   • The Alternative Energy Taskforce is working across the disciplines to create a curriculum that is responsive to industry and meets the needs of our students and employers.
   • Academic Service Learning projects are available for many departments to use in their courses.
   • Research projects, such as the Cook Hall Project, provide opportunities for interdepartmental work.
   • Women’s Studies, Diversity Studies, Sustainability, Innovation, Honors, Education, AFP, Peace and Justice, International Studies – all involve curriculum integration opportunities and coursework offerings across departments.
   • The New Program Development process that is under development will support interdepartmental programming.
   • GLO work is entirely interdepartmental – Our general education program is a giant interdepartmental effort.
   • The Celebration of Women in STEM Fields involved several departments and was led by Women’s Studies.
   • The Women’s History Month colloquium was led by Social Sciences.
   • The activities associated with the “Great Lakes Water Wars” presentation were led by the Sustainability Team.
   • Biology and Physical Sciences collaborated to deliver science lessons to Upward Bound students.
   • Faculty from Biological Sciences taught science to high school students participating in the summer healthcare academy.
   • The Veterans Advisory Group lead by the Student Records/Registrars Office worked with several cross college departments in a effort to improve services for GRCC student Veterans. Tore Skogseth, GRCC Counselor, has started a support group and Sara Dorer is helping to lead an effort to upgrade the Veterans website pages with important information to help in their transition to and from college.
18. Provide job-shadowing opportunities:

- Many of our programs have co-op experiences, internships, fieldwork, and other professional job-shadowing opportunities.
- SWD has been working with the West Michigan Strategic Alliance in their state-wide internship project.
- A GVSU graduate intern worked in the Enrollment Center from May through August. Her job shadowing and special assigned projects gave the Center staff a “fresh outlook” on different ways of serving our students.
- Several new employees from the Tassell M-Tech, the Learning Corners and the West Shore Campus were invited to the Enrollment Center to job shadow staff and learn about the customer service processes of the Center.

19. Expand hours of support services to evenings/weekends/and year-round service:

- Counseling and Career Services hours have been expanded to include increased evening hours for Fall 2009. Next Step: evaluate summer and weekend service needs and hours.
- A full-time support person was hired at the Tassell MTEC to lead and manage the new Career Advancement Center. This CAC provides students with admissions, career, and counseling services as needed and appropriate.
- The Enrollment Center offered Accuplacer testing on Saturdays in February, March and April of this year to incoming students. (A special testing day was also held on Sunday to accommodate new student athletes.) Due to the success of the Saturday testing program, selected Saturdays have already been set for the rest of the academic year.

20. Increase all services to match increase in students / Make support services available at MTEC and off-campus:

- Our Michigan Works contracts were increased to meet community need and to better serve the higher number of clients.
- A full-time Counselor, a Director, and ESP were added to the Lakeshore Campus staff.
- We have increased the number of Counselors to meet the increase demand and need for student advising/career/ counseling contacts.
21. Host faculty-student sporting events:
   - No specific action was taken during this year.
   - Next Step: Plan and host these types of events, including enhancing the intramural program. Work on a strategy to integrate athletics into campus life.

22. Host department honors banquets:
   - We do hold the Delta Pi Alpha Honors Banquet annually for the top 5% of our graduating class.

23. Host department festivals:
   - “Musical Moods” annually celebrates the accomplishments of the Music students and faculty.
   - Celebrations of Black History Month and Constitution Day were hosted by the Social Sciences Department.

24. Bring outside community people into classes:
   - This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.

25. Grow Summer Bridge Programs:
   - We offered 2 Math and 1 English program this summer, serving approximately 104 students.

26. Grow pilot support program for student athletes:
   - We have doubled the football participation in the athletic academic support program (52 to 100 plus) with modifications to the program based on the 1st year evaluation.

27. Offer credit-bearing seminars focused on specific topics or issues:
   - No specific action was taken during this year.
   - Next Step: An Honors seminar may be possible using the Paradox of Affluence curriculum. We need to develop a seminar development process.

28. Develop role-playing opportunities:
   - This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.
29. Offer fewer presentations, and employ more Socratic Method:
   - This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.
   - The Provost’s Office distributed the booklet, *The Art of Socratic Questioning*, to all faculty members (full-time and adjuncts) at the beginning of Fall 2009.

30. Participate in a professional organization’s service activities:
   - The United Way Day of Caring has been promoted and offered to staff, and SSS has participated.
   - ASL notified faculty of community opportunities, such as Make A Difference Day and Martin Luther King Day service opportunities.

31. Develop clearly stated objectives for coursework:
   - The New Course Approval Committee emphasized learning outcomes for all new courses. These learning outcomes are the foundation for the writing of course objectives.

32. Create interactive lecture-labs:
   - This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.

33. Create an improved and more user-friendly GRCC website:
   - SWD and Lakeshore Campus & Academic Outreach are working with IT and their team to improve their websites this year.
   - The newly organized IT unit is also focusing efforts on improving the GRCC website.

34. Improve collaboration with transfer and parallel schools:
   - This is ongoing work with each department and Kathleen Owens. Ex: Architectural and Mechanical Design are revising and updating their agreement with Lawrence Technical University for the transfer of students to complete a 4-year architectural degree.
   - The pilot Programs of Study work in Accounting and Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Science) resulted in review and development of a sequence of coursework and learning experiences needed for admission and transfer from GRCC in these areas.
• Pilot work is ongoing with our K-12 district on curriculum – There are plans to expand this work to the 4-year colleges (for example, to improve articulation and transfer of Biology from HS to GRCC to GVSU).

35. Provide workshops for faculty on new technologies that students are using:

• DLIT offered a number of workshops in this past year on social networking, podcasting, and other technologies. DLIT also offered opportunities for faculty to experiment with emerging technology. Faculty worked on lecture-capture and animation, among other projects.

36. Develop collaborative teaching opportunities:

• Next steps for Interdisciplinary studies – Make team-teaching more viable.

37. Benchmark for data on engagement:

• GRCC participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement in April 2009 and the National Community College Benchmarking Project in July 2009. Both survey projects will yield benchmark data.

38. Develop comprehensive BB grading system:

• DLIT and IT have continued work on linking Bb grading and PeopleSoft final grades.

39. Create learning communities among disciplines:

• No specific action was taken during this year.

• Next Step: We may be able to pilot this in the Honors Program.

• The Career Advancement (CAP) Program utilizes the learning community model.

40. Define measures of success:

• No specific action was taken during this year.

• Next Step: Discuss results of GLO assessment with departments and programs – led by Gen Ed Assessment Team.

41. Create learning circles on research into student effort:

• This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.

42. Collect internal data on nature of GRCC student effort correlated with student success:

• No specific action was taken during this year.
• Next Step: Possible research project.

43. Improve GRCC Today:

• GRCC Today converted to web-based format.

• Next Step: Encourage Communications to survey faculty and staff during Fall 2009 about the usefulness and accessibility of GRCC Today.

44. Have instructors give credit to students for using tutoring:

• SLA initiated this strategy for MA 095 courses for Fall 2009.

• Next Step: Link tutoring to course outcomes and assessment.

45. Develop a student financial crisis fund:

• The President’s “Give Back” Initiative was instituted for Fall 2009.

46. Create new Blackboard spaces for faculty-student interaction:

• This is a teaching strategy that only faculty members can decide to use as part of their classes.

47. Offer pizza parties for high-performers:

• No specific action was taken during this year.

• Next Step: The Honors Team is working on rewards and benefits for Honors students.

48. Offer jumbotron to relay school/student activities to everyone:

• No specific action was taken during this year.

49. Offer field trips:

• Many faculty members utilize field trips to augment learning (for example, in Culinary Arts and Criminal Justice).

• Many departments use field trips (for example, Biology, Visual Arts, and Physical Science).

• Next Step: Create a clear process for field work experiences/courses.