GRCC Strategic Leadership Team

Key Strategic Issues

October 2013

Data Set: What is our community telling us?

MixMax Team: 2

- Community perceives too much attention/focus on DevEd – as if we have a choice – don't understand mission & open access
- Need to balance that with high level of academics & rigor
- Branding
- Try to do too much: Focus
- Measures – are they meaningful?

MixMax Team: 4

- Branding(transfer – workforce), Alignment: k – 12 partnerships/collaboration(developmental education – curricular alignment)
- Transfer education, development studies, general education, community service, career and tech ed
- Student success pathways – need to create a framework like the examples on page 15
- There is a difference between SUCCESS and COMPLETION. How do we define completion? Can students be successful without completion? We should define what we think is our student success agenda here at GRCC
- NO where in the primer…..shouldn't students not globalization was only complete but be prepared to work in a global workforce?
- We are missing the student voice…….what do they want/need? Get student input or the strategic plan

MixMax Team: 8

- Communication /branding/clarity around who we are
- Partnerships/ strategic relationships with k-12
- Focus – what do we want "to be"?

MixMax Teams: 3

- Common theme – branding, communication & telling our story – there are 3 areas related that are a big problem – get away from the impression text
- West Michigan sense – "we shouldn't beat our self-down" West Michigan cult. The competition is so much greater for attention & education – we cannot be left behind
- Enrollment is down some
- When the economy turns around, it doesn't change the debt that four year schools create for students

- Students don't see the value about reverse-transfer that once a student starts a four year program to attend GRCC
- "Concept of Grand Rapids High" we need to get away from this because it is further perpetuating the belief that were just an extension of high school
- There's also the belief that we disregard secondary schools
- Too much developmental attention at GRCC
- Lack of counselors at high schools to help student's identify the value of GRCC i.e. City High has only one counselor for the entire high school population, lack of resources is a real problem
- Two trends – transfer & developmental education
    - Do we spend more time on SWD or Arts & Sciences?
    - Do we need to be more aggressive with our 4 year program?
    - Do we need to be more aggressive with our k12 partners since our students are not prepared for college and classes
    - "Community says you shouldn't have to remediate all of your students
- Does our perception or our community's perception match our data?
- Some reality is that our developmental data matches national averages
- "High quality education at an affordable price"
- "I went at CC and I am employed"
- "GRCC works and so do I!"
- What does a community end mean? We cannot be everything to everybody. It must be a more specifically defined
- Innovation
- Skills – higher skill set
- Branding
- Marketing
- Relationships with our partners
- Development education
- Aggressive recruiting from other colleges (high quality students are drawn away to other schools)

MixMax Team:?

- Communication/branding needs work (People don't know what we do)
- Building on community outreach (our student's do better)
- Perhaps more focus on the Arts & Sciences end of things
- We want them to think of this as a quality place, cost effective place to being (not "the place that can't say no")
- We aren't providing enough initial information/advising to students
- Transfer guide
- We provide too much developmental educ. Do we provide all things for all people?
- Be proactive, be able to address needs more quickly
- How do we prioritize? What is our focus?
- Note: It says we don't offer any online degrees, but we do
- Connections/K-12 partnership
- Conclusion:
    - Communication/branding/clarity around who we are

- Relationships with k-12
- What do we want to be?

Data Set: External Assessment: What does the educational community say we should do next?

MixMax Team: 2

- Interventions are not systemic - we have a lot of the services but they are not organized or accessible in any systemic way
- Not focused enough on the student/learner
- Faculty don't see their role in the completion agenda – focus more on content than student learning
- Need common understanding of student success
- Need ways to make stronger connections w/ students

MixMax Team: 8

- The main thing we decided to add to our previous list (since several overlaps occurred) was a focus on strengthening student connections with faculty, staff, and <u>each other</u> especially to help aid in retention/completion

MixMax Team 3:

- Colleges – how do we educate students about how to navigate through the intake process and give them freedom to customize an educational plan to identify what's best for them
- We've been all about access & success, but now we need to focus on "what does <u>completion</u> mean?" Completion must be one of our strategic issues. It is so important that students make a decision – have a plan to complete their education
- First generation students have more challenges & we need to help students – persistence, resiliency, are critical to complete
- Tutoring has a stigma attached to it that must be removed
- Mentoring is so important for students who do not have parents to help coach & navigate them through the system
- Advising when done good works & it should continue – we have a much broader base of advising, maybe make it mandatory for all students to be advised
- There are financial aid opportunities to improve the system so that students are making progress on a path, not 2 years of wellness classes
- Access
- Success
- Completion
- Prime
- Advising & Accountability
- Intake & Navigation
- Students + scared + don't ask for help as much as they should
- Access + success, but not emphasize completion
- Advising with increased accountability
- Intake with improved navigation & mentorship
- Reduce student fears – they should feel more comfortable asking questions

MixMax Team: ?

- Pathway to student success – lack of info/direction

- Everything requires more $ and staff
- Box on page 21
- We have to meet the needs (no one else will) Create a schism
- Partnerships to address this
- Student connections (with faculty, with each other) in and outside class
- Help students learn to take responsibility/ownership
- Conclusion: Strengthen students connection w/ faculty/staff/each other

MixMax Team:? (Terri Tillman)

Academic Alignment

- Conflicting views about developmental education: Perception of too much Dev. Ed. VS we should concentrate on Dev. Ed. by partnering with High Schools.
- It is challenging to partner with K-12 schools because much of their practice and decision are driven by public policy (curriculum, assessment, accountability, etc.).
- There is a conflict interest between access and academic rigor. Should we establish baseline for academic access vs an open access?

Access

- How do we brand ourselves: Are we a workforce development school, transfer school, Dev. Ed. school, etc. (45% -50% of students). How do we balance?
- Competition is getting stronger, so there is definitively a threat. For example MCC is establishing a satellite in Coopersville.
- Also we have competition with online schools. They are very aggressive with their recruitment. Most online schools do not offer developmental education.
- We do not provide enough support for online classes.

Community Outreach

- There seems to be problem with defining Outreach. Should it be engagement? Perhaps we should spend more time thinking about this "end" as it relates strongly towards our branding.

GRCC Experience

- We need to work on measuring the impact of some student organizations, clubs, and other amenities.
- We are not tapping into our alumni as resource for awareness, marketing, branding.

Student Success

- What is the effective way to collaborate with High Schools? Is it curriculum alignment, whose curriculum? support services? What is the most pressing issue?

Workforce Development

- We seemed to have branding issues with workforce development. We would like to know more. Seems contradictory to what we know, since workforce development seems to have more presence and exposure to the community.

- There seems to be a concern around technology-related programs. It takes us longer to implement and offer programing in this area. Thus, we are not meeting the needs of some industries.
- Funding and partnerships are of concern

External Assessment: What does the educational community say we should do next?

- We should be asking the right questions from students to meet their needs.
- Data-driven decision making. Use data to design interventions not just for reporting and compliance. We are consumers of data but we fail to use it.
- We need to address the question of access and college ready.
- The complexity of serving everyone (location, online, access to resources, personal responsibility).
- What does Access and Success mean? Everyone (student, faculty, support staff, community, leadership, etc.) has a different definition about these two categories. For example when we talk about access, are we talking about academic access or access as it relates to geography, cost, flexibility, etc.?
- The term "Completion" adds more to the confusion of "Student Success"

Strategic Issues

- Branding and marketing.
- Community engagement (whatever this means to the community and GRCC)
- Access (financially, academically, geography, physically)
- Conflicting feelings about developmental education
- Data-driven decision making

Mix Max Team: 1

Organize all ends around student success

- Define/operationalize student success so that work
- Align measures and indicators to student success

Create a holistic systems of advising

- Financial aid/counseling/faculty advising
- Align counseling strategies to student success indicators
- Clarify expectations for all students around advising

Create pathways for students

- Help students to understand purpose and intentions while at GRCC
- Create clearer curriculum pathways
- Help students to understand pathways - particularly undecided students
- Better alignment between K12 and college experience

MixMax Team:5

Discussion regarding region as it relates to Access –

- Coordination and pipeline for high school students to community college.

- Community Outreach not clearly defined – brand not clearly defined. Awareness is key.
- Value proposition not touted well enough.
- We do not strategically communicate our transferability of credits.
- Think strategically with regards to connecting with k-12 partners.
- Once we market – we have to make sure we follow through with our promise and retain and complete our students.
- Is there a leader in higher education that is similar to GRCC that is a model that could be adapted to our institution?
- If we could build a relationship with a 4 year institutions that results in an agreement that we fulfill the 2 year requirements and our four year partner fulfills the 4-6 year requirements.
- We spent a lot of time talking about Meijer model – as they are successful given the competition that exists in their backyard just like we have with higher education competition in our backyard.
- How do we scale up the great things that we do currently? We do a great job with small groups – have not been able to impact the majority of our students with this great work.
- We know that undecided students are not successful – why don't we leverage this knowledge for the good of our students?
- GRCC seems to be afraid to fail – and we do not like to let things go.
- O'Banion says, we have to let things go so that we can do the work that we know will help our students complete.
- We really need to create a model that is based on the things our students tell us.

What are our students telling us?

Team ?:(End: Workforce Development)

CCSSE

- Part time students
    - Students looking for more flexibility
    - Will need more flexible service hours – look at service model
    - How do we make personal connection to PT students
- Do we know enough about our part time students (survey them, age, goals) custom questions on national survey asking students what we could do to improve
- Finding out best way to communicate w/ PT students. (Faculty announcing things) Communication w/ adjuncts to make sure they know what to communicate. Faculty overall.

SENSE

- Financial aid – continual communication effort. Increase in help in that area during "rush" period. Front line staff training in financial aid so all can answer some questions
- Fully utilize early alert. Allow early alert for non-credit
- Earlier outreach to k-12 (what schools are doing to support college prep) we need to access what they are doing
- Peer mentoring or successful students give examples or make videos showing how they are successful
- Assist students in development of career plans
- Consider employing other assessment tools to help students decide what their talents are – what direction to go in
- Support growth in faculty development – different teaching skills
- Increase engagement with online students (video, texting)
- Create small teams so students can learn from each other. Design of our classrooms to make learning can happen.
- Include student feedback in everything

Withdrawing student survey

- Need for counseling staff to help students with personal issues
- Easier for students to come back
- Educating staff on how to work w/ diverse populations and caring for students
- Pay attention to why students are dropping out and their reasons why to react
- Keep looking at transportation issues
- Leverage knowledge of non-credit program success

Team:?(Don MacKenzie)

SENSE

- General retention: Our students need a more high touch rate in their initial weeks on campus or they have a greater chance to leave
- We need to start the motivation process early – Orientation?

- We need to help facilitate the question early "why are we here?"
- High touch in this world is hard when students are more high tech than high touch
- Things students are asking for <u>or</u> requesting it appears that we already have their students needs in place
- Today's students want a website that they can do more question searches like "Google"
- We have to find the line between spoon feeding students and expecting them to find <u>all</u> their own help
- Students need to know its ok to ask for help. But they need to know how to ask for help
- How are we off the cohert group if we are doing no more pre-testing?
- Our pre-work we do with students pre-GRCC is vital and not only being done here but across the country
- Once you get a diploma you can't go back to high school if you need more help
- Key Strategies:
  - Connection to faculty and staff on campus pivotal early on
  - How to access the help already available need to be clear
  - Help them answer the question why are you here? How do I succeed?
  - We need to stop being

CCSSE Student engagement results – part – time student

  - Key > additional support/engagement opportunities need to be clear and intentional they don't just happen
  - Key > Do we need to recognize that a large % of our students are part time? Knowing this do we need to adjust our model for presentation of services
  - If our students are evening students then we need to shift some models of support and services offering
  - Now that students don't have to be full-time students to be on parent's health care we now have more part-time students….many of whom work during the day and taking classes in the evening

Withdrawing students (first 2 weeks)

- There were common themes like financial aid address them!
- Students were looking for someone that could help them
- Key > We look at processes from a process standpoint not a student process
- Key > We direct too many people to the online student center
- We need to work on our customer service across the board
- This year our students come from the no student left behind so they are test takers not critical thinkers
- We need to be sure that our student workers are prepared and well trained
- Key > We can't be all things to everyone. Strategic plan needs to be very student focused

MixMax Team:?(John Cowles)

Withdrawing student survey results for Fall 2013
  - Concentrate on early outreach, especially Financial Aid process. Communicate earlier with students regarding financial aid and other complex processes.
  - We suspect that the numbers are students that were dropped, not necessarily left by choice, for many reasons (financial aid as a main reason perhaps!).
  - It is enough to draw some conclusions from this small sample?
  - There is some contradicting communications from FAFSA, especially this note: "you may be eligible for FA". Some students interpret this as completely qualifying for FA. GRCC should concentrate on clarifying conflicting communications.

- Internal Assessment - Incidence of Developmental Education
  - The lower percentage (48%) maybe due to students choosing to work, (since the economy is better) instead of going to school, especially students that may not feel prepared for college (developmental education students). Data from students taking Accuplacer strongly suggests this claim.
  - Ethnic minorities still a strong concern. We would like to see more disaggregated data.

- Retention Rate
  - We would like to know more about non-traditional students (older students), since the average age is about 26. Could we do a survey? Questions could include, number of hours they work, preferred time to take classes (evening?)?
  - Perhaps we should concentrate resources and interventions on part-time students?
  - We need a discussion around affective skills before we talk about academics: motivation Vs effort and Ability Vs Confidence. How do we integrate affective skills into curriculum along with critical thinking?

- Course Success Rate
  - Do we have enough support services for evening students? Are part time/non-traditional students attending evening classes?
  - Do online students receive enough support?
  - What is the demand for support services in general for all students? How many prefer evening (tutoring, advising, financial aid, orientation, etc.)?

- Three-year graduation rate
  - Due to changes in FA regulations regarding subsidized loans and limits on Pell, there is a strong concern on what these changes mean to our students and our college. Especially developmental education students.
  - There are other themes at play that we seldom talk about, such as cultures within subcultures, especially for ethnic minorities as it relates to persistence (family and parental support, social capital, external network support, value of hard work, etc.)
  - Stronger attention should be given to ethnic minorities especially Latinos and Asians in our region, as these two populations have grown and will continue to grow in the years to come.

- SENSE
  - We need to talk more about motivation, aspirations and self-efficacy.
  - We need to find a way to eradicate the negative perception around Accuplacer.
  - We should take note of the results from male students. The irony of having high aspirations but low performance. How to solve the dilemma of self-sufficiency.

MixMax Team:? Academic Alignment(Erin Busscher)

- **New student engagement results (SENSE)**
  - Our team was concerned about the information shared in one of the findings sections on the SENSE presentation. It was stated that 'Men seem to have an inflated sense of self-efficacy' based on some of the data, and we felt this was misleading and more of an assumption. Can this be removed from future presentations?

- Our team felt that there were weak findings from this report and did not feel comfortable acting on most of the findings to help create the next three year strategic plan
- Our team wondered if we should try to have some of the same supports for all students that we currently have in place for developmental education students. For example, mandatory advising, or assigned advisors?
- Our team would like to see a more welcoming/organized campus for students as well as mandatory orientations. Is it possible to send the orientation video to all new students like we do with new adjuncts?

- **Student engagement survey results (CCSSE)**
  - Our team feels that better on campus resources are necessary for 'way finding'. The data from CCSSE indicated that students had trouble finding their way around campus
  - Our team talked a lot about how to serve such a diverse population of students. How do we design our supports following a Universal Design Learning model so that all can access versus focusing on support for small pockets of population?
  - Our team felt that it was difficult, like the SENSE data, to decipher what it was saying. What the data was suggesting is unclear and we do not feel comfortable making shifts in practice using such ambiguous information.

Team: 8

- Marketing, branding, communication>What is our brand?
- Does the community know us?
- Focus> What is our focus?
- Are all things to all people?
- Partnerships strategies k -12> Are we the ones to do developmental ed or can we partner w/ others?

Team: 4

- Community is saying GRCC shows good evidence of transfer. They are happy with the accomplishments. Branding is a priority with a solid foothold in the community
- However we need to work better with k12 & do a better job of community outreach, students are not prepared for college
- Just because the data says everything is great, doesn't mean it is
- Globalization important but not mentioned
- Students are saying better partnerships with school would help with student preparedness, online classes need to be more accessible, student loans & pell grant max out, advising has opportunity for improvement (bring back advising days), losing personal interest students

Team:? Mike Light

Discussion/Parking Lot Ideas:

- Folks that attended the Summit cautioned us about the quality of the conversation. Community partners didn't really understand the "educational lingo" and many of the people there were business partners and they tended to ignore the academic issues/terms that they didn't understand and reverted back to "wheel house" issues that they were comfortable talking about.
- Are we doing a good job of making the community aware of what we are trying to accomplish? We don't seem to be communicating this issues
- We talked a lot about alignment, especially in connection with the increase in developmental education. Partnerships with High Schools…how do we solve this issue? We have students who read at a first grade level. Is our Open Enrollment mission at risk. We have issues identifying where students are in the developmental spectrum. We don't know enough about our students to make sure they are all prepared for the courses they are taking, despite everything that we have been doing over the last few years.
- Is there a perception that Open Enrollment or that CC level education is "easy" or less important. This probably goes back to our Communication issue. So, any communication that takes place needs to focus on our Honors Students and our success students.
- Should we look at professional tutoring for high end students.
- Do we really know what Community Engagement means? This isn't "extra" work.
- How do you define Student Success? We do not do a great job of determining what Students goals are when they come in. You can't measure success if you don't know student goals. A better way to think about this is that even when we collect the information, we don't do much with it. We don't know what to do with that information that students provide about goals.
- Retention isn't as important as completion.
- What is our curriculum for our undecided?
- Student Success is OUR MISSION….we just need to define it better.

ISSUES:

- Communication: in easy and understandable terms, about our mission and our brand. This should be a strong message and promote the entire college.   People take us for granted and we are not very interesting….we are the piece of the puzzle that if we disappeared the fabric of the community would be permanently torn. Communication should NOT be interpreted as just an external issue. It is both Internally and Externally needed….to students, staff, faculty, and community members.
- Institutionally we don't have the support systems to take care of the severity of the underprepared student population. Institutional Reform for Underprepared Students.
- Community Partnerships and Engagement
- Better Identity Student Goals to better define Student Success.
- Embrace the Undecided Student: Focus these students on Transfer and tell them this is exploratory and not a bad thing.