GRCC College Action Project Update
Due to SLT Exec Council: August 1, 2013

Project Title: Strategies and Initiatives to Increase Graduation
Champion Name: Diane Patrick, Associate Dean/Registrar

August 1 Update Questions

NOTE: All current CAP projects are scheduled to be completed by July, 2014.

The Champion’s responses should be direct and factual to provide a clear picture of its progress, accomplishments, and challenges.

1. Describe the past accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project since August of 2012.

Describe any changes to your implementation plan that you have made this year. Describe concrete achievements: meetings, data gathered and analyzed, plans made or implemented, changes in processes, and measured results. If your team hasn’t made expected progress, explain why things are moving slower than planned. If you implementation plan has changed, please describe why.

Status of 2012-2013 Implementation Plan – Updated August 1, 2013

a. At the beginning of the second year of this CAP, the strategy for the CAP was broadened from the first year to the current initiative of Strategies and Initiatives to Increase Graduation. In the first year the initiative was to implement a Gen Ed. (MACRAO) certificate, but in trying to implement, the team ran into complications with the “Gainful Employment” standards for a certificate.

b. Successful implementation of My Degree Path (DegreeWorks).

c. Created a My Degree Path (DegreeWorks) communication plan to inform students, faculty and staff and conducted training sessions for staff and students.

d. Worked with our Reverse Transfer Partners to investigate, develop and implement a communication plan for the Reverse Transfer Initiative.

e. Cleaned up the MACRAO requirements, adjusted the degree options for programs that have multiple degrees listed, and eliminated plan codes that are not meaningful or do not have the support of an educational department.

f. Piloted a college generated automated process to graduate students. An email was sent in April 2013 to approximately 1,870 students who had 55+ credits and above a 2.0 cumulative GPA and had not yet applied to graduate encouraging them to apply to graduate. The email contained information regarding My Degree Path and how to apply to graduate.
In summary, especially with the broadened change in strategy, the CAP 1.1.1 team has made great progress in implementing new initiatives to increase the graduation rate. The team recently decided to take on the new AGC approved policy to automatically graduate all students. This will be our main initiative for this year.

2. Describe the next steps for this Action Project for 2013-14

Be specific about the next critical steps planned to move the Action Project ahead for next year. In many cases you will need to assemble your team and develop a Work Plan that you will all agree on. This plan should be detailed as to guide your team’s activities for next year.

NEXT STEPS Graduation:
1. Benchmark with other institutions who are automatically graduating their students to see what they are currently doing. (Aug./Nov.)
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan to students on the value of earning a certificate and/or associate’s degree. (Aug./June)
3. Complete evaluation of automatic graduation process, procedures and policies, implement improvements, and make recommendations to the appropriate area. (Sept./April)

NEXT STEPS Reverse Transfer:
1. Implement a comprehensive communication plan to students that expresses the value of receiving their associate degree via Reverse Transfer. (Sept./Dec.)
2. Be an active member of the State grant for Reverse Transfer - “Credit When It’s Due.” (Aug./June)

3. What challenges, if any, are you facing regarding this Action Project?

This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback, advice, and help from the SLT Executive Team. In your response, specify blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems.

In February of 2013, the Academic Governing Council (AGC) approved the Generated Graduation Policy (Policy 8.24). The policy statement says; “Students will automatically be awarded the degrees and certificates that they earn at GRCC. Students will have the opportunity to decline these credentials.” This policy approval will totally change the current graduation process. The CAP 1.1.1 Team is currently working on the implementation of this change, but is not sure what technology obstacles they will face and if this can be accomplished with in the next year.

As stated above, the Team ran into problems with Gainful Employment in trying to award the MACRAO/Gen Ed certificate. The team is conducting further investigation to see how other community colleges worked around this issue. The team is also looking into the strong possibility this may have to be changed to a General Education milestone achievement instead of a certificate.

4. What are the measures (data) you are using to document success of your project?

How are you performing on these measures? Each project champion should be collecting data that demonstrates the progress they are making. Provide a table outlining this data. The SLT Exec Team will use this data to evaluate the success of your action project to date.
Data Gathered & Analyzed:
The following data was gathered, reviewed and analyzed as part of a *Graduation Teaching and Learning Report* presented to Deans’ Council in September of 2012.

There are over 300 less graduates for the 2011-2012 academic year as compared to 2010-2011. There are many speculations as to why. Could it be due to the economy, unemployment, changes in Financial Aid, or the length of time it takes a student to graduate? We feel another possible contributor to the issue may be the fact that there is very little promotion of the value of earning a degree or communication with students who may be eligible to receive a degree.

**Number of degrees and certificates awarded**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Winter 2011</th>
<th>Summer 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Winter 2012</th>
<th>Summer 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA w/ MACRAO</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAAS</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS w/ MACRAO</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you can see, the total number of degrees/certificates awarded for the 2010-2011 academic year was 2,103 compared to 1,706 for the 2011-2012 academic year. The question that we are faced with is “what is the cause?”

**REVERSE TRANSFER CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT**

A Reverse Transfer Associate Degree agreement between GRCC, DU, FSU, GVSU, and WMU was signed in June of 2011. During the 2012/13 academic year, two new partners were signed, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University. As stated in the agreement, “The purpose of the agreement is to facilitate the implementation of a new initiative to assist students who have transferred to one of the partnering Universities to complete an associate’s degree at Grand Rapids Community College.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th># of Graduates</th>
<th># of Non-Graduates</th>
<th># of Graduates without transfer credit</th>
<th># of Graduates with transfer credit needed</th>
<th># of Students who applied for Reverse Transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ferris State University</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Valley State University</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td>Western Michigan University</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data source: Student Records/Registrar Office as of 3/28/2012 (This will be updated at the end of summer semester 2013.)*

The challenges as you can see from the above data show a low percentage of students taking advantage of this opportunity. We have been working with our partner institutions on several changes on the data set they are using. There are other concerns that the universities are only sending one communication to the students who must then apply for the opportunity to be a part of the transfer partnership. GRCC is part of the State Of Michigan’s “Credit When It’s Due,” State Grant. A stipend of $12,000 will be disbursed to each community college. The CAP team is working on plans to come up with effective ways to use the grant dollars. To that end, since its inception (2 years ago), the Reverse Transfer policy has produced less than 100 students taking advantage of this option. One of the challenges noted by those applying but not eligible is having to fulfill our graduation requirements of Wellness and PS110. Many Reverse Transfer students are missing either one or both which precludes them from receiving their degree. It is felt that in this case, most likely, students will not take those classes while they are pursuing their BS degrees.
5. Do you anticipate that this CAP will NOT be completed by July, 2014? If yes, please discuss those components which you anticipate not being completed.

There is a possibility this could be delayed as the Team has taken on the Generated Graduation Policy, but feel this work will be continued as department work by the Student Records/Registrar’s Office.

6. From your perspective as a CAP Champion, how could the strategic planning process be improved?

   A. SLT should speak with the person the CAP is assigned to before it is assigned. This will allow for clarity and proper focus.
   B. A quicker response from SLT concerning budget requests for the CAPs.
   C. IT is spread thin strictly because of a lack in numbers in their staffing and because of this has created delays for projects that may have required their assistance.