Dear HCC community,

A lot has occurred over the past month to move the Strategic Plan forward. The full Strategic Plan teams, Cabinet and Cabinet+ attended a webinar on November 18 presented by Andrew Ninnemann, a senior analyst with the Community College Executive Forum at EAB, an educational consulting organization. The webinar was entitled: Preventing Early Attrition: Supporting Critical Student Decisions from Application through the First Semester. The speaker identified focus areas that colleges can strengthen to support student engagement during this pivotal time of their academic journey.

- Making Self-Service Work
- Supporting Optimal Financial Decisions
- Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions
- Minimizing First Semester Drop-out

You can view the webinar PowerPoint and an Implementation Toolkit, which includes materials such as: curricula for FAFSA ambassadors, a non-cognitive student needs intake survey, tips for texting students and parents, implementing meta majors, and compressed mini-semester templates. It is important to note that HCC is a member of EAB and we all have access to these and many other resources.

The webinar was timely because we are seeking to improve existing practices on campus to reduce barriers for our students. Toward that end, there have been three Town Hall meetings (October 9 and 21, and November 21) to discuss ideas to increase
enrollment and retention. Several ideas emerged which resulted in proposals that met the following criteria: define the problem, propose a solution, identify responsible parties and show alignment with the Strategic Plan. To date, three ideas have been identified and are currently underway; a one year academic schedule, eliminating the drop for non-payment of tuition and fees, and simplifying the guest application for wintersession and summer sessions.

The last Town Hall meeting this semester is scheduled for Wednesday, December 18, from 9-10 a.m. in the CFE. This Town Hall will be based on the theme of equity and is being designed by a number of HCC faculty and staff who attended a conference in October entitled: In Pursuit of Equity, Accountability & Success: Latinx Students in MA Schools. This “Equity, Accountability & Success” group has met several times to discuss strategies on equity that we might consider for HCC. These will be shared at the Town Hall and all are encouraged to attend.

As you know, equity is woven throughout our Strategic Plan and is listed as Strategy #2: Work with the communities we serve to increase equity. Team C has been carrying out this Strategy by examining student success through a holistic approach that will address students’ academic and life challenges. One action item they are working on is a concept paper for presenting a new model for onboarding HCC students. The paper will be a foundation for how a model will be introduced using the following format:

- Statement of Need: What is the problem to be addressed?
- Work Plan: What is proposed to meet this need?
- Partnerships: What collaborations will support the model’s success?
- Understanding Barriers: What obstacles are anticipated and how will they be addressed?
- Outcomes: List 1 - 3 SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)

The team has been examining best practices and model programs as well as HCC data on retention. This includes a review of current and past retention-orientation pilots that came out of the Title III grant. They have also held a brainstorming session with Team D: External Alignment, on student support in tutoring and transition resources for adult learners. The concept paper will identify gaps in our current onboarding processes, identify necessary resources and how the model can be integrated into the HCC culture. The team is currently completing a draft of the concept paper and will submit it to Cabinet before the end of the semester. They will consider feedback from Cabinet during the month of January and revise the draft as needed. The team will then present a draft to the larger HCC community in February/March through several open forums where students, faculty and staff can provide feedback.

To learn more about the implementation of our Strategic Plan, please come to a World Cafe on Wednesday, December 11, from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. in the lobby of the Leslie Phillips Theater, just before the Professional Association meeting. We will have refreshments and you can visit different tables that correspond to the themes of the Strategic Plan: Professional Development & Inclusion, Course Offerings & Placement, Student Success, External Alignment, and Resources. SP teams will showcase what they have accomplished with their action items. They will welcome questions and let you know how you can participate. I look forward to seeing you there!

Kind regards,
K.C.

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