2017 Annual Reflection
Worksheet

Contributors

Please identify the stakeholders who contributed to the 2017 annual reflection with their name and title.

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Student Success Vision

a) **Briefly outline your institution's current student success vision. Note that this vision should be your ideal for how students will experience your college. It should include overarching, achievable goals that will act as key milestones as your college moves towards your student success vision.**

The Student Success Infrastructure (SSI), and the SSI Coordinating Council in particular, is ECC's umbrella organization where student success interventions on campus are strategized. Its purpose is to promote "*broad engagement around student success by focusing on innovations that produce systemic results*" and is composed of faculty and administrators working together on four primary interventions:

- Outreach and engagement of target populations
- Supplemental instruction
- Faculty research community
- Cultural competency workshops for employees

These four areas were borne out of discussions on data and reflections on where we should best leverage efforts to maximize impact. Critical to these conversations are Data Rangers – faculty, staff, and administrators serving as data and assessment advocates for project holders/leaders. Data

Rangers champion ECC's Data-Based Decision-Making Model, which includes eight steps critical for moving projects from concept to scale:

1. Defining the initiative
2. Establishing goal and targets
3. Identifying resources needed
4. Implementation
5. Analysis of results
6. Reflection on meaning
7. Sharing findings
8. Deciding whether to institutionalize

In addition to these four primary interventions, the SSI also pilots projects for future scaling. Pilot projects encompass everything from testing new software to funding new hires, and many of ECC's most noteworthy endeavors began as SSI projects that were later institutionalized within various ECC departments.

In the 2015-16 academic year, the SSI Coordinating Council selected one main metric to guide all efforts that year. This metric was student retention from fall to spring. During each SSI meeting that year, the IR office prepared data showing how we worked together to design programs to foster retention among disaggregated groups. This process and reflection led to the establishment of our SSI intervention on outreach for target populations and the hiring of a Student Success Coordinator. We explain this progress later in the report.

In the 2016-17 year, the SSI did not formally articulate a common goal but instead continued work from the prior year. At first, we were self-critical at not having articulated a common goal, but in retrospect, we realize implicitly that how we invest our time and where we direct resources reflects our priorities – and these have not changed. As an institution, we clearly value having a mixture of interventions directed at both students and employees. We also value equity through cultural competence efforts and a central focus on target populations.   We also place a premium on articulating clear processes and expectations through contract negotiations. Finally, we value data and leverage Data Rangers with increasing regularity; in sum, we expect that any successful project will eventually find a permanent home through institutionalization.

While these summarize our key values for student success, we admittedly do not take the time to reflect as often as we should. With the appointment of new SSI co-chairs next year, we plan to re-write the SSI vision and may even rename the council. We have already broadened representation to include SSI Coordinating Council members from the Alliance for College Readiness and advising, which we believe will go a long way toward fostering engagement and centralizing efforts across campus.

b) Briefly describe your systemic change priorities that help your institution achieve its student success vision. We recommend identifying 2-3 priorities. Each priority is likely comprised of multiple student success efforts that work together to achieve systemic change.
Note: A student success effort is defined as a policy, practice, or procedure designed to reduce or eliminate barriers to students' progress and ultimate success in education and the labor market.

For the past few years, the SSI has been operating in 'status quo' mode – i.e., doing what is necessary to keep moving but scaling back on larger initiatives. At ECC and other Illinois colleges, loss of appropriations and student MAP funds have made it risky to invest in costlier initiatives. The Higher Learning Commission is lobbying the state legislature to avert cuts which have already caused many institutions to close programs. Nonetheless, the SSI remains focused on key priorities to achieve our vision for student success which include: (1) strategic enrollment management; (2) aligning work to academic affairs; and (3) equity.

(1) Strategic enrollment management. The process of preparing our new strategic plan this year prompted greater reflection on the importance of enrollment management. Prior to joining ATD, ECC had maintained an office and steering committee on enrollment, but those were dismantled as our focus moved from access to completion. Now, with state budgets frozen and Illinois losing population, enrollment has reemerged and a new enrollment strategy team has formed. At present, the team consists of members from admissions/registration/records, marketing, communications, and planning/institutional research. The group is still developing but intends to add faculty and merge with the SSI. Even though costs for new positions and travel are curtailed, costs for student outreach continue. Examples of recent hires focused on enrollment include a new assistant dean over dual credit and new high school recruiters.

(2) Alignment of SSI to academics. SSI values its role in funding innovation with minimal red tape; however, we realize that allowing flexibility to launch initiatives comes at a price. Budget limitations are causing us to centralize more and more under a common SSI framework. While SSI historically focused on initiatives not housed elsewhere in the college (e.g., equity, indirect costs for faculty development, etc.), we still strive to incorporate more areas under the SSI umbrella – even some longer-standing enterprises like advising and developmental education that already have "home" departments. The Data-Based Decision-Making Model introduced in last year's reflection has been unifying in this regard. Most campus committees already use the framework to some degree in guiding their operations, even if they are unaware they do so.

(3) Equity. We are aware that many students come to ECC with significant barriers to success, and promoting equity remains a cornerstone of our vision. As we discussed in last year's reflection, we are implementing key strategies focused on "targeted" populations. We prefer to use this term, as we believe it forces us to reexamine our success metrics periodically and adjust them in light of changing demographics and needs. Currently, our focus is on African-American students, who, in aggregate, run an increased risk of withdrawing and are less likely to graduate. Since last year, we have scaled up services for African-American students – quadrupling attendance at Fall and Spring Connections (formerly Student Welcome Receptions) from less than 10 to over 40 attendees per session. We have quadrupled membership in the Black Student Achievers club (formerly Black Student Association) from 6 to over 26 active members. The Student Outreach Coordinator, who we hired last year as an SSI initiative, has worked extensively with students to launch a student newsletter, a guest speakers' series, and an student off-campus retreat. These direct interventions are complemented by indirect supports, including diversity training for managers and cultural competence training in hiring, which we will expand to classrooms and students next year.

c) **What key metric(s) are you using to measure progress on achieving your student success vision?**

Data source(s)
Select all that apply:

☐ Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence

☒ IPEDS
☒ National Community College Benchmarking Project
☒ National Student Clearinghouse
☐ Pathways Project (AACC)

☐ Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework

☒ Student Achievement Measure
☒ Voluntary Framework of Accountability
☒ Other? _Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) Data Submissions, Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE)_____

ECC continues to use ATD's five key student success indicators: 1) developmental course completion; 2) "gateway" course completion; 3) proportion of students completing all coursework

successfully (C grade or better); 4) persistence from term-to-term and year-to-year; and 5) successful completion of ECC certificates and/or degrees for measuring the progress in meeting our student success vision. The SSI reviews these measures annually, disaggregated by ethnicity and gender, to gauge progress on ECC's intervention projects. In addition to ATD metrics, ECC has used a number of other data sources through participation in national initiatives. ECC participates in Complete College America (CCA) via the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) which compiles data for all Illinois community colleges. This information is used in conjunction with ATD metrics and discussed with the ECC President, Board of Trustees, and SSI members. ECC also participates in the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP) on a three-year cycle and uses NCCBP measures to discuss ECC student success metrics. This past year, ECC has joined the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) as another opportunity to utilize nationally benchmarked data on student success measures. ECC was a Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) beta-testing institution and participated between 2013 and 2015. We withdrew from VFA participation but still utilize many VFA metrics (and, thus, by extension Student Achievement Measure metrics) for internal reporting and decision-making. ECC regularly uses National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data to track student transfer and other indicators. The SSI also reviews the ATD Annual Feedback Reports, provided by the NSC, for the purposes of measuring progress related to student success interventions. Finally, there are numerous standard ICCB data submissions that ECC uses internally to calculate student performance. Data submitted to ICCB, and data that ICCB submits to IPEDS on our behalf, allows ECC to benchmark student success performance relative to other Illinois community Colleges. ECC regularly utilizes IPEDS and ICCB data for benchmarking many student completion metrics in the annual ECC Performance Report of institutional KPI's.

As part of our research agreement with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), Achieving the Dream has access to your institution's NSC data and calculated outcomes. If you would like to share data from other sources, we encourage you to do so. There will be an opportunity to upload data at the end of the form.

Progress Update

Reflect with your group on your institution's progress with building capacity in each of seven critical areas that contribute to improving student success over the past academic year. Consider both the positive factors and the challenges affecting the student success efforts at your institution. Note which areas will be priorities for further development in 2017-2018.

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Leadership & Vision

The commitment and collaboration of the institution's leadership with respect to student success and the clarity of the vision for desired change.

Is this area part of your strategic plan? ☒ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

Did your college pursue any strategies in this area during the past academic year? ☐ **Yes**   ☒ **No**

Progress

Although ECC did not pursue specific strategies regarding leadership, we do recognize and appreciate the support and vision of our President and Board of Trustees when it comes to student success. Leadership is one of the 7 Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) areas that received highest ratings during our administration of this survey last spring. On rating scales of 1 to 4, the following items received average ratings of 3.5 or higher. (The other areas were: teaching and learning; strategy and planning; and policies and practices.)

ICAT Item	Avg. Rating
Does the college have a clear and compelling vision for student success?	3.6
Does the Board of Trustees provide leadership for student success?	3.5
Does the president actively support efforts to improve student success?	3.6
Does the Board of Trustees use data to promote student success?	3.5

One promising practice that relates to leadership is the formalization last year of the Data-Based Decision-Making Model by the SSI Data Rangers. This model outlines 8 steps critical to moving projects from concept to institutionalization and include steps such as resource identification, data analysis, and budget alignment. As a roadmap for how we scale effective practice, SSI used this model last year to host a sharing meeting/dialog of various committee chairs during which time we came to understand that we have been doing this implicitly all along. We already have the personnel, processes, and structures in place to support student success strategies, and in the end, we realize we simply need a better way to educating ourselves on how various committees orchestrate their work and more formalization of reporting practices to foster understanding and engagement.

Challenges

Both SSI co-chairs (the faculty and administrator leaders) are stepping down this summer, and we look forward to working with our new co-chairs beginning in August 2017. Our administrative co-chair is our interim Vice President over academic affairs (Teaching, Learning, and Student Development) and we

believe her leadership will bridge a connection between the SSI and the core mission of teaching and learning. She was recommended by the SSI and appointed by our President. The faculty co-chair is a full-time tenured faculty member of the math department who has been the recipient of many SSI mini-grants and is an ardent supporter of our work. He was elected by the Faculty Senate and confirmed by the President.

Following the departures last spring of our chief officers in human resources and technology, the Vice President of business and finance has assumed leadership of these areas. We remain optimistic in her leadership, but realize that merging such disparate areas until the umbrella of finance presents its own challenges. Additionally, our communications/public relations office has taken over leadership responsibilities in marketing and web design, and we believe having all communication and engagement related functions "under one roof" will help SSI efforts. The senior director of this combined area has been an active SSI member for quite some time. Both ATD coaches pointed out that concerted efforts to relaunch SSI communications is critical to making progress. This finding was echoed in a recent district residents' survey. Communication and engagement of internal and external constituencies is a focus area of our next strategic plan due in the fall.

Progress was hampered slightly this year by contract negotiations among both our faculty and staff unions, electrician/building engineers union, and the formation of a fourth union of campus police officers. Activities always seem to diminish somewhat when collective bargaining occurs, as our staff time is devoted to honoring these labor commitments.   Nonetheless, we are pleased that we have hired a new full-time employee relations manager to replace a long-time vacancy in that area.

Goals for 2017-2018 Academic Year [Optional]

Based on the analysis of your institution's progress and challenges over the past year in this area, identify one or two goals for the coming academic year for leadership and vision. What are some action steps your institution plans to take to achieve these goals?

None have been articulated.

What resources, services, or assistance can Achieving the Dream provide to assist you in reaching these goals?

None have been articulated.

Promising Practice

Does your institution have a promising practice in this area that other Achieving the Dream institutions would benefit from?

☐ Yes   ☒ No

[IF YES] Please describe the promising practice:

Data & Technology

The institution's capabilities to collect, access, analyze and use data to inform decisions, and to utilize and leverage technology to support student success.

Is this area part of your strategic plan? ☒ Yes   ☐ No

Did your college pursue any strategies in this area during the past academic year? ☒ Yes   ☐ No

Progress

This summer the Planning and Teaching, Learning & Student Development (TLSD) offices are partnering to develop a data stewardship committee with leaders from IT, Academic Systems, and HR for the purpose of formalizing data governance. For several years, ECC has relied on analysts within various areas (e.g., finance, HR, etc.) to troubleshoot problems and devise technological solutions for internal data ERP system usage. While IT and departmental analysts ensure that our data system is fully *functional and operational*, ECC has not, until now, had a similar institutional commitment to ensuring that our data system is *strategic* in regard to data curation and quality, access, policy, and usage. We envision this new data team will focus on strategic matters, freeing analysts to handle matters related to operations.

Additionally, research conducted by the SSI Data Team (Data Rangers) this past year has been instrumental in helping SSI understand the efficacy of its many initiatives. Using predictive modelling techniques, the Data Rangers updated an analysis that had been piloted in fiscal year 2016 to use statistical modeling in order to better identify student behaviors that lead to success (versus those that do not) when it comes various outcomes – completing courses, retention to the next year, and so on. This analysis has helped focus the work of SSI on student retention and completion of developmental coursework in order to advance our student success agenda.

Finally, discussions are underway with regard to data visualization. The college currently uses Excel pivot tables to publish ATD data submission metrics and other commonly requested student success measures. These tables are used extensively by faculty and deans in writing program self-studies. For the past year, IR has received training in Tableau in order to move away from presenting data in tables (such as in Excel) and toward the creation of more interactive charts and infographics – and this work has since been extended to Business and Finance. Entrinsik Informer, a partner of ECC's Ellucian Colleague ERP system, has also recently launched a new dashboard tool that the college is exploring. While Informer is currently used primarily by HR, discussions are underway to extend its use to other areas in the future. Taken together, we realize that data visualization, in whatever form, is critical to fostering engagement and the sophisticated inquiry we strive for.

Challenges

Changes in the area of data and technology are slow in coming because ECC has historically lacked a strategic focus in this area. A 2015 report of ECC prepared by SPEC Associates (on behalf of the Gates Foundation) pointed out that while ECC has leveraged Data Rangers effectively for particular SSI projects, it has not adopted a cultural focus on technological change or invested in the types of institution-wide capacities necessary for sustaining data warehousing, predictive analytics, or dashboarding. It will be important for the newly formed data stewardship team to lead efforts in this area if lasting changes are to occur.

To complicate matters, the retirement of the institution's long-standing chief technology officer last year resulted in hiring of a new chief officer who reports to the business and finance area. A new reporting hierarchy removes this office from direct reporting to the President; nevertheless, we are fortunate that the new hire is an internal appointment who maintains close working collaborations with IR and Academic Systems.

Finally, our biggest challenges in the area of data relates to funding and securing alternative revenue. Without a state budget for multiple years, ECC and all Illinois colleges face challenges in terms of upgrading software and technology training. Data and technology needs are not being funded at full capacity, and for the time being, the college is operating conservatively with respect to this area.

Goals for 2017-2018 Academic Year [Optional]

Based on the analysis of your institution's progress and challenges over the past year in this area, identify one or two goals for the coming academic year for data and technology. What are some action steps your institution plans to take to achieve these goals?

None have been articulated.

What resources, services or assistance can Achieving the Dream provide to assist you in reaching these goals?

While ATD's arrangement with the National Student Clearinghouse eases the reporting burden of direct data submission to ATD, it also does not allow for the same course-level benchmarking data that had been available in the past. ECC had used this data for understanding how our students matriculate through developmental and college-level coursework compared to other institutions. We would appreciate anything ATD could do to facilitate benchmarking of course-level data (e.g., placement in developmental English or math and subsequent retention to college-level course) in order to compare our performance to that of other institutions.

Further, our ATD feedback report contains student-level calculated outcomes disaggregated to only the three most prevalent race/ethnicity categories (in addition to gender and Pell grant status). At ECC, these race/ethnicity categories include Asian, Hispanic, and white students, but because we are strategically focused on African-American students, we would be interested in disaggregations that also include African-Americans, and we have made this request via our coaches.

Promising Practice

Does your institution have a promising practice in this area that other Achieving the Dream institutions would benefit from?

☒ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

[IF YES] Please describe the promising practice:

This past year, Data Rangers have taken on the task of revising and updating predictive modeling efforts that began the prior year using a statistical method called "propensity score matching" to understand which student-focused behaviors are impactful on success. This method builds on prior regression analysis that had been conducted for SSI to identify priority areas for strategic focus (retention and developmental course completion, as mentioned earlier in this report). In propensity score matching, a statistical likelihood (or propensity) of earning a certificate/degree and/or transferring is calculated for each new student in past cohorts by examining the demographic and academic characteristics that we know about them *before they first enroll in courses at ECC*. Each "successful" student is then paired with an "unsuccessful" partner in the dataset with a similar probability of success score. In this way, we are able to make the claim that each pair of students are equally likely to have been successful at ECC given their combined demographic and academic circumstances prior to first

enrolling, but one student from each pair ended up being successful while the other did not. Comparing students who either were or were not successful in this manner provides a post-hoc way of controlling for variability without a controlled design and forces us to focus on behaviors and milestones that students make or achieve during their time at ECC to distinguish the different paths to success that students can take. A presentation regarding this practice was recognized at the Illinois Association of Institutional Research as best paper, which also resulted in a subsequent presentation at the national Association of Institutional Research conference in Washington, DC in spring 2017.

Equity

The commitment, capabilities, and experiences of an institution to equitably serve low-income students, students of color, and other at-risk student populations with respect to access, success, and campus climate.

Is this area part of your strategic plan? ☒ Yes   ☐ No

Did your college pursue any strategies in this area during the past academic year? ☒ Yes   ☐ No

Progress

In the ECC strategic plan, we pledge to provide all students, regardless of life circumstances, with the supports necessary to be successful. This year was particularly inspiring for equity, which builds upon the efforts we described last year. In last year's report, we explained how the SSI invested in a new position, the Student Outreach Coordinator, to serve as a "concierge" and advocate for students. This hire has been quite successful. The coordinator meets extensively with students facing challenges, strengthened new student welcomes, sponsored a speaker series for African American month, launched a student peer mentoring program, and reinvigorated the Black Student Achievers club. Enrollment in that club expanded from 6 students last year to over 26 students currently, and preliminary analysis indicates that students who met with the coordinator attempted and completed more hours than similar students who did not. As part of her role, the coordinator refers students to tutoring, TRIO services, and wellness counseling. Despite our precarious funding situation, we intend to expand this position part-time to full-time. In keeping with our Purposeful Budgeting approach, our quality improvement project with the Higher Learning Commission, we are awaiting fresh data from spring 2017 to defend our decision to permanently encumber funds.

Related to equity, we also spent time last year hosting workshops on deficit language and renewed our partnership with Dr. Cris Cullinan for training in cultural competence. The language workshop

encourages us to be mindful of limiting terminology (e.g., words such as "at risk" or "gaps") and has been instrumental in helping us prepare drafts of our next five-year strategic plan. The cultural competence workshops have resulted in more effective hiring processes. Analyses conducted last year show that questions being asked by hiring teams are more reflective than questions used in the past, and we believe this has resulted in more culturally competent hires. Thus, we have made it a requirement to complete this workshop before serving on hiring teams. In doing so, we are creating conditions for equity to flourish for years to come.

Challenges

Several challenges exist within the area of equity. First, we would like to foster more engagement with men of color and are trying to be intentional about outreach to African-American males in our region. Next year the Student Outreach Coordinator plans to work closely with area high schools on this front. Secondly, the coordinator has encouraged SSI to reexamine an intervention we tried years ago and moved away from, which is to track students' use of student services ("touch points") such as tutoring, library services, etc. To do this well, we need to train frontline staff to check with students soon after welcome receptions and again at mid-term, if not more often. Third, we continue to challenge ourselves to critically examine outcomes of College 101 (our first-year student success course) which is offered concurrently with other courses during the first half of each semester but which may be needed sooner. Relatedly, while SSI and First Year Programs have examined persistence from first to second terms, we realize that attrition happens sooner for some students. For African-American students in particular the period between application and enrollment is a time of disengagement, and we would like to understand reasons why some students apply but never show up. Finally, the Student Outreach Coordinator and Student Life team intend to develop a peer mentoring program next year with equity as a central focus.

Goals for 2017-2018 Academic Year [Optional]

Based on the analysis of your institution's progress and challenges over the past year in this area, identify one or two goals for the coming academic year for equity. What are some action steps your institution plans to take to achieve these goals?

Our goals next year include expanding deficit language and understanding how deficit-based mindsets impact other historically oppressed and marginalized students not limited to race. Based on survey comments from this year's workshop, we need to continue the discussion on deficit thinking and have plans in place to create an African-American culture and history course. A discussion on privilege seems to be warranted as well as creating "safe spaces" for engaging in crucial conversations.

Further we intend to expand cultural competency training beyond hiring to include faculty and student workshops and infusing competency into classrooms, student activities, and other learning opportunities. We need to adjust our thinking from a conceptual level to a specific and practical level to operationalize non-deficit-based language and cultural competency into our institutional practices.

What resources, services or assistance can Achieving the Dream provide to assist you in reaching these goals?

As mentioned earlier, we would request that ATD/NSC include African-American students in our annual data reports (see data and technology). Further, we were impressed at this year's DREAM conference by the work being done at Amarillo College in creating a composite exemplar of what the typical student looks like and using that persona to foster outreach and understanding. At ECC, our "typical" student is similar to that of Amarillo's: part-time, female, and Hispanic.

In addition, we are looking for tools to foster engagement for men of color as previously explained.

Promising Practice
Does your institution have a promising practice in this area that other Achieving the Dream institutions would benefit from?

☐ **Yes**   ☒ **No**

 [IF YES] Please describe the promising practice:

Teaching & Learning

The variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic and non-academic supports strategies designed to facilitate student learning and success

Is this area part of your strategic plan? ☒ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

Did your college pursue any new or scaled strategies in this area during the past academic year?
☒ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

Progress
Within teaching and learning, we have made several enhancements to the curriculum. The SSI continues to pilot supplemental instruction, which we intend to scale from 3 sections of statistics to 10 sections of

statistics and college algebra. Our work to date illustrates the importance of having students attend all supplemental sessions, especially those held just before exams. Course success and persistence data are still uncertain, but we note that students seem to work together more routinely than they used to. Last year we introduced a new five-credit language arts course (LTC 099) which combines developmental English/writing and reading in an accelerated format. The course is especially fitting for students who place two levels below college-level in reading and English. Finally, we continue to expand avenues for students to demonstrate competencies and have revised our placement testing procedure (see policy and practices) to recognize high school GPAs as an option for demonstrating proficiency.

The college continues its long-standing efforts to address college readiness. Our Spartan Alert early notification program has become more hands-on. We hired a new director over this area to replace a long-serving associate dean, and he has spent time tracking the roughly 5% of students who trigger alerts dues to poor attendance or missed assignments. The new director is a former academic advisor who will also participate on the SSI moving forward. Finally, in our draft strategic plan, we have created a goal and strategies around guided pathways toward completion with specific strategies on outreach/recruitment, retention and completion, assessment of policies and practices, and building efficiencies in course scheduling.

The Illinois Community College Board has also introduced a new template for program reviews, which we will adopt next year for the first time. The template puts more emphasis on process descriptions, analysis of data, and cost comparisons to other programs. Unfortunately it also encourages short quick-answer responses over more detailed interpretations and synthesis. For this reason, will need to ensure ECC programs understand the importance of review for improvement and not simply for compliance. This year we had several programs not participate in program reviews even though they were required to do so, and we are not sure what to make of this. The review process is designed to be a meaningful part of program and budgeting prioritization.

The Faculty Research Community continues to foster collaboration and conversation among faculty with regard to understanding learning processes, instructional strategies, assessment, and cultural competence. It also provides faculty with a vehicle for further scholarship. This practice was praised as exemplary by our ATD coaches, and it is one we intend to scale within the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, as that area has now moved back to Teaching, Learning and Student Development from its former home in HR. We plan to hire a new full-time director over the center who will report to the interim Vice President.

Finally, the Board of Trustees successfully renegotiated a labor contract with faculty this spring. The new contract includes many long overdue improvements in instructional practices, such as the removal

of contractual language related to faculty counseling (a holdover from the 2014 reorganization of that area). We also negotiated an extension of the trial period for faculty to join the union, which allows more time for observation and evaluation of new hires. Additionally, we clarified expectations for faculty workloads, course syllabus content, online learning, and exam proctoring.

Challenges

Our biggest challenge in this capacity area remains engaging faculty in SSI efforts. Along with data stewardship, the areas of internal communications and faculty professional development emerged in our ICAT survey as future challenges.

In the course of discussing ICAT results in March and during our ATD coaches visit in April, we came to realize that the importance of being intentional about making SSI a core of everything we do. Some still see SSI as ancillary to Teaching, Learning, and Student Development rather than essential to it; thus, we intend to extend the SSI framework and use it to undergird inquiry and decision-making college-wide. Our next strategic plan outlines goals and strategies for doing this.

Goals for 2017-2018 Academic Year [Optional]

Based on the analysis of your institution's progress and challenges over the past year in this area, identify one or two goals for the coming academic year for teaching and learning. What are some action steps your institution plans to take to achieve these goals?

What resources, services or assistance can Achieving the Dream provide to assist you in reaching these goals?

None

Promising Practice

Does your institution have a promising practice in this area that other Achieving the Dream institutions would benefit from?

☐ **Yes**   ☒ **No**

 [IF YES] Please describe the promising practice:

Engagement & Communication

The process of enabling key external stakeholders, such as K-12, universities, employers and community-based organizations, and internal stakeholders across the institution to participate in the student success agenda and improvement of student outcomes.

Is this a high priority area for your institution? ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Did your college pursue any strategies in this area during the past academic year? ☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**

Progress

To determine progress in this area, we compared the communications plan we set in 2010 against where we are today in 2017. Through this analysis, we realize how far we have come. Back in 2010, we had goals to communicate about SSI in several ways:

- Faculty Senate Meetings and Newsletters
- Board of Trustees Meetings and Quarterly SSI Updates
- Opening Day Convocations
- President's Reports to Community
- New Employee Orientations
- Spartan (Employee) Newsletters
- Data briefs (*Piece of the PIE* newsletters from the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office)
- College-wide Conversations
- Alignment to ECC Strategic Plan
- High School Counselor Newsletters
- VISIX Information Screens on Campus
- Student Blogs
- Social Media Updates

Seven years later, most of these practices occur routinely. For example, the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office prepares data newsletters (*Piece of the PIE*) on a monthly basis. The President prepares State of the College updates twice annually. Areas which do not occur as routinely include student blogs and high school newsletters, which are sporadic, as well as employee orientations.

One area that requires ongoing attention is community updating. While we are strong in some respects, we have work to do. A clear strength is our legislative affairs capacity, which is a Cabinet-level function. Our full-time director of this area ensures constant contact with elected officials at the local

and state levels. Another strength is social media, and the Cabinet last year approved the hire of a social content manager as part of the Communications reorganization we mentioned earlier.

One challenge remains workforce engagement. A Workforce Development Council formed two years ago, as we described in last year's reflection. This team is tasked with strategizing ECC's role in developing the local economy and improving communications with area business leaders. A pair of community forums held in conjunction with strategic planning last year educated us on how we can promote ECC programs and services among businesses and also how we can get more involved in local business events.

In sum, it is refreshing to look back and see where we have come from in terms of communication and engagement. Upon the advice of occur coaches, we will take time to launch a fresh communications plan next year.

Challenges

Fostering understanding and educating ourselves what various committees/departments do is a constant challenge at ECC. Over the years, employee surveys and 'town hall'-style meetings have implicated internal communications as problematic compared to other aspects of ECC culture. In actuality, we believe that limitations in this area might have less to do with communications and more to do with professional development. In fact, we have more communication channels at ECC than ever (e.g., paper, web, social media) and more storywriters, documenters, and data rangers. So, while information is readily available, what appear to be lacking are protocols around team-building, leading for change, or writing/presenting reports. A common refrain heard at ECC is *the same few people go to every meeting*. As an institution, we need to do more to foster participation among everyone with skills or interests while at the same time holding ourselves as accountable for team-building as we do any other essential duty of our jobs. We believe that improvements in professional development among administrative leaders in particular will go a long way toward fostering the trust, encouragement, and camaraderie we need to improve communications. This finding was echoed on our results to the ICAT.

Goals for 2017-2018 Academic Year [Optional]

Based on the analysis of your institution's progress and challenges over the past year in this area, identify one or two goals for the coming academic year for engagement and communication. What are some action steps your institution plans to take to achieve these goals?

As described earlier, we intend to renew our action plan around communication of SSI efforts. While the college already reports extensively about SSI in newsletters, employee convocations, and President's Reports, these require readers or attendees to know about student success (or at least have curiosity) from the get-go. What has been missing is more purposeful dialog about student success in action and

greater reflection on how current SSI work aligns to strategic goals. This is especially important for those who may not be as involved in SSI efforts as the rest of us. In our new strategic plan, we intend to be even more intentional about educating others and will do this by setting a new college-wide goal on service excellence which will include strategies on: (1) fostering interdepartmental dialog, and (2) documenting explicitly how budgets and resources tie back to improvements.

What resources, services or assistance can Achieving the Dream provide to assist you in reaching these goals?

It would be helpful to know how other institutions report results to keep them fresh and front and center for areas of the institution which may not otherwise play a direct role in student success efforts.

Promising Practice
Does your institution have a promising practice in this area that other Achieving the Dream institutions would benefit from?

☐ **Yes**   ☒ **No**

[IF YES] Please describe the promising practice:

Strategy & Planning

The alignment of the institution with the umbrella goal of student success and the institution's process for translating the desired future into defined goals and objectives and executing the actions to achieve them.

Is this area part of your strategic plan? ☒ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

Did your college pursue any strategies in this area during the past academic year? ☒ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

Progress
The college is launching a new five-year strategic plan, which is expected to start in fall 2017 (for fiscal year 2018) and guide operations until the end of 2022. Our planning process began in fall 2016 with a series of employee and student dialogs from which we generated a list of 101 ideas for further exploration. The President then established a cross-functional planning committee of faculty, administrators, staff, and a Board of Trustees member to review this feedback and examine national,

regional, and college reports. An environmental scan of demographic and employment trends and a community survey of residents' perceptions about ECC was also generated during this time.

Through continued discussions the committee refined and reduced these from 101 to 11, and then to 7, and then to 5. At that point, 5 goals and 14 strategies were crafted, and drafts have been shared since March with employees and community members. Still in draft mode, the new plan has been vetted with the Board and is being re-vetted again with community stakeholders through a web survey. We expect the final plan to be prepared in late August when faculty and staff reassemble for the fall 2017 semester, and we expect the Board will approve it shortly thereafter.

Goals of the new plan will focus on the following:
- Student learning and equity
- Community partnerships
- Purposeful pathways
- Service excellence
- Affordability

Strategies under each goal will guide our work until the end of 2022 (5 years). As the plan is launched, the President will convene a panel of Goal Champions to lead cross-functional teams in the deployment of actions and reporting of progress. These will, in turn, guide budgets. The committee has already articulated success measures and metrics for each goal.

Challenges
In the past, operating goals aligned to each strategy were recorded in a common college-wide database which contains key action steps, outcomes, and responsible parties. While we have been intentional about tracking goals, we have not been as a diligent about reviewing or discussing them once entered. As a result, many goals are overlapping and not used as purposefully for budgeting as they could be. In deploying our next strategic plan, our biggest challenge will be to educate ourselves about our own work and understand how various goals reinforce one another. This self-learning process will be especially important for those who have not participated on the planning committee and seek clarification. The President will task a small set of senior Cabinet leaders (Goals Champions) to oversee this process. Their main responsibility will be to garner a sense of connectedness needed to carry out the communication plan we describe earlier.

Relatedly, another important challenge – and one that was a focus of the committee as it created the plan – is to consolidate the number of goals overall. This challenge is not unrelated to communications, as we know that honing goals and improving communication go hand in hand.

Goals for 2017-2018 Academic Year [Optional]

Based on the analysis of your institution's progress and challenges over the past year in this area, identify one or two goals for the coming academic year for strategy and planning. What are some action steps your institution plans to achieve these goals?

Members of the Cabinet are reading Dickeson's *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services* as a guide for making decisions about actions and budgets. We recognize that its methodology requires a great deal of documentation and oversight which will necessitate a healthy investment of staff time and budgets, which are in short supply. This is not only a goal but also a challenge for us as a college.

What resources, services or assistance can Achieving the Dream provide to assist you in reaching these goals?

Budgeting and planning models used by other colleges would be especially helpful.

Promising Practice

Does your institution have a promising practice in this area that other Achieving the Dream institutions would benefit from?

☐ **Yes**   ☒ **No**

[IF YES] Please describe the promising practice:

Policies & Practices

The institutional policies and practices that impact student success and the processes for examining and aligning policies and practices to remove barriers and foster student completion.

Is this area part of your strategic plan? ☐ Yes   ☒ No

Did your college pursue any strategies in this area during the past academic year? ☐ Yes   ☒ No

Progress

Several changes were made to administrative procedures in academic year 2016-17. First, the Academic Progress Procedure requires students maintain cumulative GPAs of at least 2.0 or otherwise participate in support strategies until their GPAs return to good standing. This procedure was updated to include developmental courses in GPA calculations, which had previously been excluded. This change allows advisors to monitor students more closely and intervene when needed during students' first year when many take developmental courses.

Secondly, the college's Minimum Competency Procedure was expanded to include many different forms of qualifying credit – including early college credit, prior college coursework, and new types of placement and high school equivalence tests. The procedure was also revised to indicate that prerequisites are not only mandated by the Illinois Articulation Initiative for general education transfer but may also be used as prerequisites for other ECC courses.

Third, the college clarified the appeal process and flowchart for students carrying out grade appeals and outlined the steps students need to take to follow up if an appeal is denied. Relatedly, the college updated its procedure on plagiarism and academic honesty.

Challenges

We do not anticipate many challenges in this capacity aside from funding issues, which are a perennial challenge across Illinois. Generally speaking, the college is data-driven when it comes to policies and procedures, and we are fortunate to have a good deal of oversight from the Cabinet and the Board of Trustees in regards to policy matters. Each meeting of these executive teams and the Deans Council involves some degree or process and procedural review, and revisions to existing procedures and additions to new ones are given multiple readings with ample time for discussion and debate at all levels. At times, we only wish we had more revenue to make policies happen quicker but are always cognizant of their impact on students. Overall, the policies and practices capacity is a strong area at ECC. We are adept at doing more with less, and our union culture and Student Life and Student Government Association assures a strong sense of ethics and a solid system of checks and balances to know what we should be doing and when we need to do it.

Goals for 2017-2018 Academic Year [Optional]

Based on the analysis of your institution's progress and challenges over the past year in this area, identify one or two goals for the coming academic year for policies and practices. What are some action steps your institution plans to achieve these goals?

The college follows a set schedule when it comes to updating administrative procedures. Deadlines for reviews and edits are contained within the procedures themselves, and oversight is maintained by the Cabinet. In academic year 2017-18, the college expects to update procedures related to: course auditing; making course changes and withdrawals; re-taking courses; and clarifying requirements for academic residency within ECC's service district.   As we describe under the Data and Technology area, we will also create a data oversight committee tasked with setting additional policies in regard to data governance and quality. This is an area that has been somewhat underdeveloped, and the establishment of this team will hasten expectations for data analytics college-wide.

What resources, services or assistance can Achieving the Dream provide to assist you in reaching these goals?

None have been articulated.

Promising Practice

Does your institution have a promising practice in this area that other Achieving the Dream institutions would benefit from?

☐ **Yes**   ☒ **No**

[IF YES] Please describe the promising practice:

APPENDIX A
Student Success Measures & Definitions

General Student Success Data Specifications

Achieving the Dream requires:

- That each institution analyze **at least four years of disaggregated data** for its student success measure.

- That **data be disaggregated on at least three levels**:
  - Ethnicity/race
  - Gender
  - Income status (Pell recipient status)

Analyzing Your Data

Achieving the Dream has developed the **Achieving the Dream Data Template** to assist institutions with tracking student success data and presenting results.

The **Achieving the Dream Data Template** is a part of the Leader College application and annual reflection and can be found in Appendix B of this document.

Defining the Cohort

The Achieving the Dream Cohort may be defined in one of two ways: (1) certificate- or degree-seeking students **new** to your institution in the fall term, including full-time and part-time students; or (2) certificate- or degree-seeking **first-time-ever-in-college students** attending your college in the fall, including full-time and part-time students.

Measure 1: Completed college-level English and/or math in year one
Number and percentage of students successfully completing (grade C- or better) gateway courses within <u>one year,</u>

Institution may report gateway course completion in one of three ways:

(1) Math
(2) English
(3) Math and English

Measure 2: Persistence of cohort from term one to term two or year one to year two

Number and percentage of students persisting from year one to year two (fall-to-fall) or term one to term two (fall-spring).

Measure 3: Credential attainment

Number and percentage of students attaining a degree or certificate within <u>three years</u> or <u>four years</u>

Measure 4: National measure

Metric from national data system that provides evidence of institutional success such as credit accumulation, transfer with baccalaureate degree or transition to labor market.

This measure is subject to the same guidelines as the other four measures (disaggregated on three levels, four years of data, etc.). National data sources include:

- Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence
- IPEDS
- National Community College Benchmarking Project
- National Student Clearinghouse
- Pathways Project (AACC)
- Predictive Analytics Reporting Framework
- Student Achievement Measure
- Voluntary Framework of Accountability

APPENDIX B
Data Template Example

Downloading Data Template

Click here to download Achieving the Dream Data Template. Please see a preview of the template on the next page.

Preview of Data Template

2017 Annual Reflection & Leader College Application - Sample Community College

Data Selections

Enter in the appropriate values in the boxes below. **Each yellow box needs to be filled in or you will be unable to enter numbers into any of the tables.** These values will then auto-fill throughout the rest of this workbook.

Institution Name	Sample Community College

Cohort Type	- Select One -

Metrics	
Gateway course completion choice	- Select One -
Credential attainment choice	- Select One -

Race/Ethnicity	
Largest race/ethnicity group	- Select One -
Second-largest race/ethnicity group	- Select One -
Third-largest race/ethnicity group	- Select One -

Metric Definitions

Cohort Type

New to Institution: All students who entered your institution for the first time in the given fall term. This includes both full-time and part-time statuses; students can be certificate-seeking or degree-seeking.

First-Time-Ever-in-College: All students who are both new to your institution (see above definition) AND have no prior postsecondary enrollment.

Metrics

Gateway course completion: Number and percentage of students in the given cohort successfully completing gateway courses within <u>one year</u> with a grade of **C- or better.**
- Courses should be non-remedial in nature.

Persistence: Number and percentage of students in the given cohort persisting from term one to term two (fall-to-spring) or from year one to year two (fall-to-fall).
- Students need to be enrolled in at least one credit-bearing course.

Credential Attainment: Number and percentage of students in the given cohort attaining a degree (associate/baccalaureate) or certificate from your institution within either three years or four years.
- Please note that these cohorts will be "earlier" than the ones used for other metrics, since you are examining a metric that occurs three or four years forward.

Demographics

General Instruction: All students will be accounted for in the "Overall" category. Some students are not expected to be represented in the subgroups (e.g., student does not have a known value for gender).

Race/ethnicity group: When selecting the largest, second-largest, and third-largest race/ethnicity groups, please refer to the size of your most recent Fall cohort to assist with your choice.