

**Notes from President's Council**  
**Tuesday, November 16, 2010 9:00-12:30 p.m.**

1. We began with a review of the College Plan and walked through each priority.  
**Priorities I and II** –focus on academic achievement and support and student success. Tyrone opened by saying that Faculty Assembly had endorsed the General Education restructuring and a committee is in place to begin work on this. Tyrone has sent a reminder note to Krista that student membership is welcome on the Faculty Assembly committees. Dave B. will follow up, as well.

Honors initiative: Dan is polishing up the report the consultant gave us and we will circulate it, especially to those who participated in conversations with the consultant to help us think about a JSC-specific honors approach.

Pathways from CCV to JSC: there are many; but, we still think the more precise and explicit the better. A suggestion was made by Tyrone to see if faculty chairs might occasionally visit CCV sites (especially Winooski) to be available to students.

We have begun to build pathways focused on majors in business and psychology (mostly through EDP). Les Kanat was mentioned as someone who consulted to CCV when they designed their associate degree program and could help advance the pathway from CCV to JSC/ENS.

In general, we are making progress in the year one strategies in Priorities I. and II.

**Priority III** is focused on Enrollment for Success and we combined our progress discussion on this area with guidance for recruitment targets.

Undergraduate Vermonters: continue to learn what we can about VT high schools and their individual trends; visit and invite students here. Current feeders: North Country, Richford, Enosburg, BFA Fairfax.

Student Ambassadors are very effective; we should take students along on visits as much as possible.

Diversity goals: we discussed attracting minority students to JSC. **Doug** will query number of students who were born outside the U.S. or self-describe as a minority students. We will then establish our current marker and set goals from there.

Undergraduate o/s : we have expanded our reach and attended / are attending more fairs in the central and northwest. We will note carefully whether this approach seems to be increasing o/s applications and yield. Two of our 'city' out of state students have joined admissions staff in CT and MA; all reports were that these sessions were hugely successful. Ideally, this will translate into enrollment at JSC. If not, we are contributing to raising aspirations among some students who may not have been thinking about college.

Barbara will convene a small group of PC members to look at goals for both urban and minority students to help guide admissions in their efforts.

We discussed an Eduventures research project completed for JSC. It suggests that the least-prepared students are the most likely to depart after one year. While this

sounds obvious, the finding is that level of academic preparedness does not seem to correlate with initial yield (enrollment), but does correlate with year one to year two retention. (A small group will study and report for next PC meeting)

We talked about the word 'retention' and how it describes the most basic level of continuing; we reminded ourselves that we are using 'student success' wherever we can in the plan and are aspiring beyond simply 'keeping students' another year or so.

We discussed our relationship with CCV as a crucial one to be a highly desirable four year college for CCV grads (or pre-grads) to choose as their next BA-granting step.

Summer semester was also discussed as an enrollment topic. We talked about summer as a time to increase students' likelihood of early success or progress to degree. While summer 2011, as Jo Ann optimistically says, is "just around the corner", we may be able to tinker with course offerings to select those that will best serve the greatest number of students. Jo Ann will offer advice in this area. We talked about a summer bridge program for students to strengthen entering academic skills; JSC had one about 20 years ago and it may be time, again, to reinvent one.

We then turned to the topic of graduate enrollments. We saw a 50 student decline in graduate enrollments (Fall 10 over Fall 09) . So far (by way of explanation), we've documented a significant drop in third-party payments—suggesting that agencies and school districts might be less likely to part with professional development dollars in the current economy. (Doug will look into this and determine whether the drop is spread across our programs or focused on one of them.)

Dan mentioned a new initiative—in early discussion—contemplated by the education faculty; it would be a concentrated 15-month long special education Master's degree that could spark graduate enrollments and assist our grads in being more competitive in searches as they apply to school districts.

We also have talked, on occasion, about EDP as a vehicle to deliver a graduate level degree. Both these topics are in the early phase and would require some policy accommodation—within VSC BOT and, possibly, approvals from the VT Department of Education.

**Priority #4 Lamoille Contributions** Barbara reported on the Civic Engagement group's first meeting—a good discussion on what it means to be engaged as a citizen, how we can better engage with our county (and wider area). The wording of this goal probably needs adjusting to reflect the notion that we (JSC) ought not only think of itself as a 'contributor' as much as also a partner and student of our local area.

**Priority #5 –IT and Campus Improvements:** Sharron and Doug talked about VSC 2011 and IT implications; Sharron reported on progress in VAC, and Bentley. Barbara reminded people of the emerging planning group to look at McClelland and possibilities—within our own college resources—to make some building corrections, reconfigure space, etc.

**Priority #6-Fund Raising and Grant Writing.** Barbara has a follow up meeting this week with consultant Christine Graham. Interest in finding assistance with grant

writing is mounting. Deb suggested a resource person who might be available to do some free-lance grant writing and Barbara has an appointment with her for next week.

2. "Fifteen Triggers for a dialogue on Improving Student Success" by John Gardner— Dan shared a list of fifteen strategies First-Year Expert Gardner presented at a conference recently. We walked through the list and were aware of and familiar with all fifteen and, in many cases, making significant progress.

Some reminders: Yes, there is a sophomore slump!; Senior Year Experience is needed, too!

3. Degree Completion Program: Reaching out to the 90 credit/early departure student

We had a drafting session on what a 'degree completion' program might look like. While our EDP program is basically a completion program (students need to have earned 60 credits to be accepted to the program), our conversation focused on reaching out to students who had departed JSC prematurely—at the ~90 credit point.

### **Why would we do this?**

- To do our part to assist former students in reaching a goal and realizing social and economic benefits of completing a degree
- To reach a new group of prospective (returning) JSC students and increase tuition revenues
- To more fully realize our mission as articulated in our mission statement of meeting students at "diverse starting points".
- To increase JSC degree completion (though this would be an informal calculation; it would not 'track' with cohorts that are currently reported)

### **We raised several questions to ourselves:**

#### **Would we reach out to students who had departed JSC or design our program to appeal to any Vermonter who had left a BA degree program at ~90 credits?**

We will do the research to see how many of our own early pre-degree departures we have—going back as far as is reasonable from a workload perspective—and think about how widely to pitch our program when we see numbers.

Would we design two programs? One to reach out to students who left the campus program prematurely and others who had left EDP before degree attainment?

We agreed we would focus on EDP as our 'default' completer program; but, as we reach students and learn their situations, some might choose the study on-campus model.

#### **How far back do we reach?**

As far back as we can.

## **What will our Communications Strategy be?**

We don't know yet; but, we will need one and want to evolve it as the initiative advances. Other colleges or state who have launched this kind of initiative have usually begun with personal letters; some have gone to newspaper ads.

## **What is the role of APL ?**

Most students take the Assessment of Prior Learning course before 90 credits; in some cases, though, it may be right for students. CAEL (Council on Adult and Experiential Learning) shows that students who take APL courses have higher graduation rates than non-APL takers.

## **Where would/could we be flexible?**

Some degree completion programs exercise flexibility about particular course or program requirements for students who have been 'away' for some years. We recognize this and would have to speak more about particulars and work with faculty.

We talked about our residency requirement—that 30 of a student's last 39 credits must be earned at JSC. A 'slippery' point to being flexible in this area is that there are regular requests from currently enrolled students for a waiver to this requirement. If we were to waive it for students returning after an absence, we would be hard-pressed to keep the requirement in force for continuing students.

We then talked about policy implications: our own and VSC policies. We will need to compile a list of potential "policy obstacles" to mount a program for returning students. (Joe Farara and Dave Cavanagh agreed to do this).

## **Would we offer financial inducements to returning students?**

It might be worth considering this; we should wait to see how many students would be identified as candidates for this program.

Two of the major obstacles other colleges have faced in designing their programs:

- Locating and contacting their pre-degree leavers: this is a time-consuming project and involves data base searches and several attempts;
- Faculty agreement on the initiative if it involves flexibility regarding requirements, especially (I'm guessing) in the major.
- A third issue is a capacity issue: we could likely not take this project on without temporary assistance and, if students came back in robust numbers (great problem!) more ongoing staff and faculty members.

## **To Do:**

Identify policy obstacles (Joe, Dave C.)

Get a "feel" for the number of students we might be talking about (Doug)

Continue discussion at our next meeting.

