



Gavilan College Learning Council Annual Report 2014-2015

History

In Spring of 2010, the Learning Council was developed from discussions that originated in the Basic Skills Committee. The committee was organized and formal structure was put into place under the Leadership of Scott Sandler and Edward Cervantes as facilitators, and Dr. Kathleen Rose as Administrator. The Learning Council is a sub-committee of the Academic Council and, according to BP and AP, (4600) reports to both Academic Senate and the Presidents Council.

Mission Statement

Learning Council is an advisory group committed to the development, promotion, and advancement of a student success agenda for prospective and enrolled students at Gavilan College. The Learning Council recognizes that there are varying definitions of student success. Learning Council will create an in-depth forum for discussing various categories of student success, identifying existing and new pathways, and creating a campus climate unified behind the goals of student success. Our primary methods would be to find ways of minimizing barriers to student success and making recommendations based on discussions and findings from external and internal best practices and research. The Learning Council is committed to the following:

- 1) Promoting a collaborative community of inquiry, awareness, and change around learning by means of bridging Student, Academic, and Administrative Affairs.
- 2) Identifying and addressing barriers to student success to increase persistence and retention levels of the college.
- 3) Fostering and promoting opportunities for Faculty and Staff Development to meet the diverse needs of our students.
- 4) Exploring and implementing various pedagogies that meet students' diverse socio-cultural learning needs.
- 5) Empowering members of the campus community in becoming advocates for learning.
- 6) Creating a safe, welcome, inclusive campus environment centered on student success, empowerment, and engagement. This mission is embedded in the Gavilan College mission statement and reflects the shared beliefs and values of faculty, staff, administrators and students.

Overview

In 2014-2015, the Learning Council was co-facilitated by Susan Sweeny and Dr. Blanca Arteaga under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Rose. Due to increased time commitments to other campus work, Dr. Arteaga stepped down and Dr. Doug Achterman was elected as her replacement in April 2015. Learning council continued to use Focused Inquiry Groups (FIGS) to complete work focused on student success. Student participation remains central to the work of the council, as is membership and participation from all staffing levels and disciplines.

All members are genuinely committed toward student success; and the goal of the council continues to be to create collaborative and inclusive dialogue about student success. The members understand the needs of students and they actively engage to ensure that true change occurs.

Given that the Learning Council highly values respect, each member is treated with equality regardless of campus role. In addition, the Learning Council includes a wide cross section of campus constituency groups, including full-time and part-time faculty, students, support staff, administrators, and supervisors. This diversity in the membership and combined skills and talents are fundamental to producing results. Members of the Learning Council report being energized by the “can do” attitude of the group. The members are present and attentive. There is a unique collegiality that is actively open to the ideas of others.

The Learning Council continues to be an advisory board for the management of our campus’s Title V Hispanic Service Institution Grant. The facilitators for the Learning Council actively recruit staff members from each grant, department, and program on campus to present current activities to the council to facilitate development of collaboration on campus.

Recommendations were made based on discussions and findings from external and internal best practices to minimize barriers and support student success at Gavilan College. In response to these recommendations, the following FIGS were formed this year:

- Information and Resource
- Communication
- Early Alert
- Veterans
- Academic Support Services
- Habits of Mind

In addition to meeting with the total Learning Council group, members of each FIG met to conduct business related to its focused inquiry. Below is a summary of those groups' work for the year.

Focused Inquiry Group Reports

Information and Resource FIG

The information and resource (I&R) FIG consists of one classified staff, one administrator and one student. Collectively over the last year, the I&R FIG met to develop a way for students to obtain information and increase access to community organizations. During fall 2014 term the I&R FIG collected and compiled a comprehensive list of local community agencies that serves San Benito and Santa Clara Counties. Agencies who participated include Covered California, Outreach, Dreams & Visions, Opportunity Fund, CalFresh, Foothill Community Health Center, Gilroy Library, Project Sentinel, Peninsula Family Services and the WIC program.



During the spring 2015 term the I&R FIG collaborated with 11 agencies and developed *Information & Resource Days* on campus. The community organizations were on campus on Thursdays from 11am-2pm and were located on Sycamore Lane to provide the campus community with information regarding the services their agencies offer. In addition to the I&R days, This FIG has also been doing research around Gavilan College implementing the ECO pass. The ECO pass would essentially provide each student who purchases an ASGC card a bus pass for the term at a low cost. A survey is being created to identify if this is a need as well as something students are interested in pursuing.



Finally, the I&R FIG was given information to participate in Fresh Approach. Fresh Approach is a pilot program funded by Kaiser to promote healthy eating and living. As a result the Fresh Approach Mobile will be on

campus for six weeks beginning July 2nd. The Fresh Approach Mobile will offer seasonal fresh uncut fruits and vegetables from local farmers to our campus community at a low cost. Students, staff, faculty, administrators and the surrounding community will be able to purchase fresh, healthy produce, learn how to store and cook the produce as well as it's nutritional value.

Overall the I&R FIG is working to bring information and resources on campus in an effort to increase access to services that meet students' basic and additional needs outside of higher education. The goal of the I&R FIG is to support students' overall ability to learn, stay enrolled and successfully complete their higher education goals.

Communication FIG

The purpose of the Communication Focused Inquiry Group is to identify and provide solutions for communication needs across all Gavilan College campuses. Our membership is comprised of faculty and staff who work conscientiously to find solutions to long-term and emerging issues. The FIG has effectively completed many of the projects that were in progress at the start of the academic year. In addition to its ongoing work, the FIG also accomplished several short-term communication related tasks that emerged as critical needs, and that should have far-reaching impacts on the college and its mission.

Members:

- A. Chair: Dr. Blanca Arteaga
- B. Ellen Waddell
- C. Lynda Kerr
- D. Stacey Porteur
- E. Doug Martin
- F. Kyle Billups
- G. Jan Berstein-Chargin
- H. Angie Macedo
- I. David Dolfin (ASB Representative)

Completed

The FIG saw success with its long-term and emergent projects:

Associated Students of Gavilan College (ASGC) Electronic Elections: With the collaboration of Kyle Billups, Kurt Lambertz, and Dr. Blanca Arteaga, the ASGC conducted their elections electronically for the first time (4/20-4/29). The ballot was created using Banner. Students were able to access the ballot and select a candidate by logging into their MyGav portal. Having elections electronic made the election process easier as ASGC members did not have to coordinate polling times and locations at the three Gavilan College campuses.

Social Media Guidelines: Identified early in the fall 2014 were issues related to social media usage by students, staff and faculty. The need for guidelines became evident. The FIG developed draft guideline suggestions and forwarded them to the District Tech Committee for a full shared governance conversation.

Communication FIG (continued)

Student email accounts: The FIG worked on two related projects connected to the new student email accounts. First, draft protocols for emails were developed and released for full shared governance conversation. The FIG also developed a draft statement for faculty syllabus concerning the responsibility of students to use their student email accounts. The draft statement has been sent to the District Tech Committee for shared governance going forward.

Going Forward

The FIG continues to work on the following projects:

The Centralized Calendar: This is an ongoing project for the FIG 2015-2016. Training has occurred for a pilot group during the spring 2015. Users are testing the software at this time. Full use for staff is expected by the start of the fall semester 2015. Work flow authorizations remain an issue. Authorized use needs to be considered. Ease of use must be worked out for users. The system has valuable components for use once it is fully operable. Discussion concerning training process for all users will be addressed once the system is ready to handle the increased use. ASGC Clubs would have to go through their advisor for any requests. Angie Macedo and Blanca Arteaga will meet to work out the details through the next school year about providing access to ASGC officers.

Steps to Success /Change of Major: To align with the Student Success Act, Gavilan College is leveraging various technologies to help promote student success. The *Steps to Success* portlet will be a self-service module enabling students to check if they have completed an assessment, orientation, education plan, and declarations of major. The *Change of Major* will allow counselors to change a student's major immediately during a student appointment. Currently, it may take up to a week for the Change of Major form to be processed. With the ability to change a student's majors, counselors will be able to create education plans during the initial student appointment. Both the *Steps to Success* and *Change of Major* projects should be operational by Fall 2015.

Centralized meetings website: Gavilan College has several shared governance committees, operational committees, task-forces, etc. Representatives from the five constituent groups report information from these committees to his/her constituent group. In addition, each committee uploads its agenda/minutes to the committee's Intranet web page. Despite these modes of communication, the FIG has identified that the Gavilan community oftentimes do not know what is discussed at the committees, when/where the committees met, and how to access the committee's agendas/minutes. To help improve internal communications, the FIG is working on a centralized meetings web site. This

Communication FIG (continued)

website will be the primary location to access all committees. Each committee will have a section contain the following information:

- 1) Agenda for the next meeting
- 2) Minutes from the last meeting
- 3) When/where the committee meets
- 4) Links to the committee's websites

This project is targeted for the Spring 2016.

Use of iLearn by all faculty: Students have come to expect faculty to provide access to course assignments. The FIG will develop draft guidelines that suggest faculty be required to upload the course syllabus for each course they teach at the minimum. FIG members are considering methods for instructing faculty with limited computer skills, including written instructions and/or video. The TLC will be contacted for additional support. Additionally, the FIG would like to initiate a campus-wide institutional conversation concerning the cost of hard copies (time and paper) for data best offered digitally.

New opportunities: the FIG continually investigates communication problems it can solve.

Discontinued Projects

The FIG has ended its efforts on the following projects:

Associated Students of Gavilan College (ASGC) alerts: With the collaboration of Jan Bernstein-Chargin and Dr. Blanca Arteaga, the FIG explored the possibility sending ASGC-related alerts to all students who purchased an ASGC card. In order to do this, students would have to opt into the alert. Unfortunately, after piloting the alert process with ASGC members, it was difficult to utilize and did not provide the expected results. It was therefore decided that ASB alerts would not be pursued.

Google Mobile App: During the past academic year, the FIG attempted to educate faculty (full and adjunct) about the availability of a free Mobile Google app. This technology allows instructors to use a secondary phone number for texting, which comes as an email to their account. New faculty now receive information concerning the availability of the technology. It was requested that the training for the app be given during the spring staff development day, but this did not occur due to more pressing issues. At this time, the FIG is no longer pursuing this project and believes it has achieved its goal even though staff development training did not occur

Communication FIG (continued)

Adjunct Mentoring Project: The group attempted to support the efforts of the committee currently developing the program. The FIG projected it would assist the committee with website design and content, as well as communication of the program. Unfortunately, the committee was not able to provide the FIG with solid direction. As a result, the FIG rescinded its offer of support and turned its focus to projects that were achievable.

In conclusion, the Communication Focused Inquiry Group has diligently worked on its projects this past year. We are confident we took great strides in accomplishing our goals towards supporting the mission of the college, supporting its vision and values towards student success, and in assisting the Learning Council in communicating its mission to improve all aspects of learning.

Early Alert FIG

The Early Alert program was developed through a Title V Grant and is designed to promote student success and retention. Early Alert allows Gavilan staff to identify students having difficulties in class and to provide support services to retain students and improve their academic performance.

The Early Alert FIG made significant moves in expanding its interventions beyond Basic Skills courses to the full campus. One key goal was to recruit ten new instructors to adopt Early Alert for use with their classes. This has been accomplished.

The FIG is also creating a tool box for students where students explore assistance available to help them succeed. In addition, the FIG is investigating the ways the affective aspects of students' experience have an impact on their success and identifying successful strategies that address these affective qualities.

Veterans FIG

The Veterans FIG is designed to promote a successful transition from military to civilian and academic life in order to ensure student Veterans' success and retention in a one-stop setting Veterans Resource Center. The Veterans Resource Center (VRC) has dedicated space that provides support and camaraderie in a safe and welcoming environment. The Gavilan College



Veterans FIG (continued)

Veterans Council was formed in Fall 2011 and established as a working sub-committee of the Learning Council with the goal of fostering awareness of student Veteran's needs for the college community, working with the Student Veterans Club in an advisory role, and assisting with the Veterans Voices Project and Events. The



Council has been learning about the needs of student veterans by attending conferences and training classes, but most importantly by listening to our own student veteran's experiences on campus, both academically and socially. Using this information, the Council hopes to expand service and provide a positive campus climate for student veterans to achieve their academic pursuits.



Veterans Resource Center Accomplishments

In the small amount of time following the grand opening of the new VRC, on November 4, 2014, the veteran attendance and participation numbers have gone from a small group of 5 to an astonishing 22 veterans. With the rise in the number of veterans has come more racial and gender diversity and happily have seen the rise in female veteran participation.

Along with the new space we now are able to facilitate VA physicians to aid in getting veterans access to the health care and information on potential earned federal and state benefits. The VRC has provided veterans with the resources needed to



Veterans FIG (continued)

be successful in their academic ambitions. It has also opened up four work studies slots that have help these four veterans get transferable experience in administration, organization, and most importantly communication. The VRC is hosting the first job fair with hopes to continue outreach with other clubs, faculty, and the student body.

Transitioning out of military life and back into the civilian population is a challenge for some and can be daunting but the VRC it has given veterans a space where they feel comfortable knowing they are surrounded by people who have shared some of the hardships and experiences as they have. It is this sense of community that the VRC has provided and for that us veterans are forever grateful.

The VRC has helped provide access to:

- Financial aid information
- VA benefits and certification assistance
- Veteran mentors and academic tutoring
- Readjustment counseling
- Scholarship information
- Peer-to-peer student support
- Mental health counseling
- Veterans Club information
- Disability rating assistance

Academic Support Services FIG

The Academic Support Services FIG was created with the goal of better integrating academic support services across campus and identifying and sharing best practices in academic support.

This group includes representatives from general tutoring, the Writing Center, ESL, MESA/Trio, the library, Distance Education, DRC, the Math Lab, and non-credit, as well as administrators and students.

The FIG met several times during the Spring semester. These meetings began with a learning session about primary services each group offers on campus and a discussion about opportunities and challenges within those groups.

Academic Support Services FIG (continued)

Several avenues have been explored to look for deeper integration among programs. Training of tutors and supplemental instructors (SI's) was discussed at several meetings; there is an ongoing effort to identify consistent state-level coding of tutoring courses that might work across tutoring groups. The FIG continues to work on the creation of a certificate available to students who complete a set of peer tutoring and mentoring courses. A common flyer was created advertising summer tutoring course opportunities across programs. As a result of conversations in this FIG's meetings, it is pursuing ways to more strongly encourage all instructors to post some content--especially assignments and supporting documents--in iLearn. Tutors and supplemental instructors in all areas agree this provides valuable assistance in identifying the exact requirements of assignments and in providing the most useful support.

Another focus of this group is to examine changing conditions and identify approaches that are coordinated and a product of discussions among key program participants. Funding and reporting mechanisms and requirements were the subject of several agenda items. The implementation of third party online tutoring is being evaluated in light of the new services offered through the Online Education Initiative. The creation of the Learning Commons creates additional opportunities for these academic support services to collaborate more closely.

The regular meeting of the Academic Support Services Group FIG is contributing to not only a better understanding of the roles each support service plays, but it is creating opportunities for FIG members to support each other in their challenges to provide the best possible academic support for Gavilan students.

Habits of Mind FIG

Habits of mind are those core skills and practices of successful students, regardless of their areas of study. Habits of Mind is not solely about students, though. It is meant for everyone on the college campus (instructors, staff, managers, administrators, etc.). Each semester, our FIG focuses on one theme or area of focus, which we think we would all benefit from by being more mindful of it. The themes of Habits of Mind, thus far, have been time management, communication, self-advocacy, and persistence.

Activities within this year included:

Creation of an Ask Me ("It's Okay To Ask") Campaign

Buttons with the simple message "Ask Me" were created and given to faculty, students, and administrators who were identified as being helpful and welcoming in their interactions with others. The goal is to foster a sense of community and

continue to spread the message that there are many people on campus who care and are willing to help--regardless of the challenge.

Johari window event for Faculty/Staff

This activity on staff development day in the Fall asked instructors to respond to questions on colored index cards. There were four “windows” (categories of inquiry) for this event:

- a) What resources do you know a lot about and believe are widely known by others?
- b) What resources do you know about, but do you think may be unknown to others?
- c) What resources on campus may you have heard of, but know very little about?
- d) What resources on our campus do you believe are needed?

This mirrored a similar activity students participated in during the previous spring.

The results of this activity created a rich discussion about the kinds of resources that are or should be available and raised awareness of some essential student needs related to food security, poverty, and other non-academic issues.

Student Activity and Welcome/What are the Habits of Mind (February 17, 2014)

This was a poster activity with real-life scenarios. Students, faculty and staff worked together to see how would we use Habits of Mind to address these scenarios.

Campus Wheelchair Tour:

Thursday, November 13, 2014 (10-1)

Thursday, March 12, 2015(10-2)

Wheelchair tours of the campus were led by Habits of Mind FIG member Tim Holliday, a student who uses a wheelchair. The goal was to raise awareness about the realities of life in a wheelchair on our campus.



Habits of Mind FIG (continued)

How Do You Wheel YouTube Video

Shared with faculty/staff on Staff Development Day (January 2015)

This video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEjOH1acUpI> and documents the wheelchair tour experience. The tour, video, and staff development presentation supported the self-advocacy theme from Habits of Mind and raised significant awareness of issues surround wheelchair use on campus.

DRC/Habits of Mind Student Panel

The Habits of Mind FIG developed a partnership with the DR that began with discussions of the wheelchair tour. A panel activity was designed in which participants consider students with visible and invisible disabilities and ways to best support such students in the classroom. This panel activity was postponed until the fall.

Habits of Mind activity around RP Group Study

This was a campus-wide event on May 12th around an RP group study that identified 6 factors that students said help them to succeed and persist:

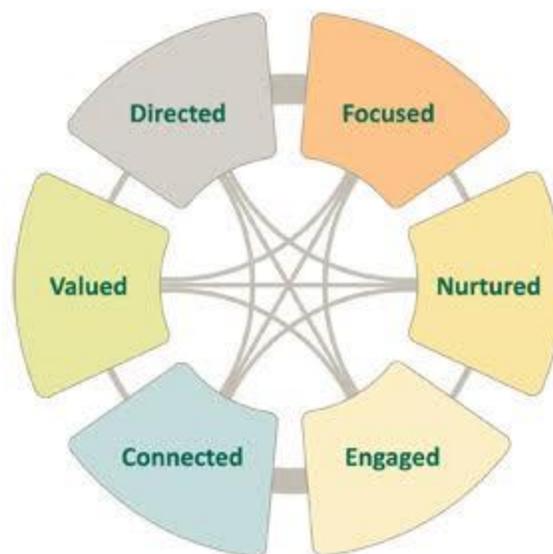
- Connectedness
- Engagement
- Directedness
- Nurtured
- Valued
- Focused

Gavilan student musicians provided entertainment and pizza was offered to students who answered questions about each of the six factors above. These questions included:

What is Gavilan doing to help you feel these factors?

What could Gavilan do better in these areas?

A similar activity was held at the Briggs Building site in Hollister. Information from this activity is being analyzed over the summer and will be shared out with faculty, staff and students in the fall.



Future Plans:

- Continue partnerships that we have started with the library, Communications Club, and the DRC.
- Work on making a more accessible website/Build on what we have started with web page.

- Work on expanding HoM membership
- Return to Time Management theme (Banners on campus will help spread message of theme)
- Do a Challenge around Time Management (similar to what we did with Communication). We have already begun developing this with Communication Class.
- Participate in Habits of Mind Leadership FIG through the community of practice supported by 3CSN and the Basic Skills Initiative Leadership Institute.

Looking Ahead

FIGS for FALL 2015

- a) Information and Resource
- b) Communication
- c) Early Alert
- d) Veterans
- e) Academic Support Services
- f) Habits of Mind

At the Learning Council's spring retreat in May, Annette Gutierrez was elected as co-chair. The retreat provided an opportunity to reflect on our year and examine our values and practices as a group. We did some reading and thinking together around an activity we called, "Cultivating Communities of Practice: Visioning Our Learning Council." We affirmed some of our core values, which include our desire to model qualities of an effective community of practice, including attention to relationships, time for fun, attention to the inquiry process, the need for broad and diverse representation of ideas, and regular engagement in professional learning--a kind of learning that includes not only study, but sharing with each other the discoveries we make about both the failures and successes that inform our efforts.