

A Day in the Life

As many of you know, I arrived on campus in July. I have slowly been getting to know my many new colleagues. I have also been looking for an opportunity to start communicating with the college community. Events last Friday (Nov. 15) provides an ideal opportunity of what I have come to see as one of Mt. SAC's greatest virtues and greatest challenges: there are a *lot* of us, and it is challenging to get everyone moving in the same direction. What happened Friday?

The Summit-Formerly-Known-for-Planning

A central part of getting acclimated to a new college environment is learning its acronyms and events. Mt. SAC has held a fall *planning* summit for several years, and it's always valuable to get faculty together to plan about how to meet our greatest challenges. This year, the offices of Instruction, Student Services, and the Academic Senate agreed that it would be more valuable to take stock of where the college is with regard to equity (following up on Frank Harris's fall Flex Day sessions), AB 705, utilization of the college's many support centers & services, and Guided Pathways. The Planning Summit was rechristened the Inclusion Summit, and over a hundred members of the college community (mostly faculty) attended general sessions in 9C and participated in discussions there, as well as in the POD loft and Founders' Hall. Senate President Chisa Uyeki closed the very productive conversations asking each attendee to commit to *one change* they will make that will have the potential to improve the student experience and student outcomes.



A lively discussion about student support centers took place in the POD Loft, with yeoman service from Barbara Gonzales serving as the human easel.

The Inclusion Summit seems to have been a great success, and a special round of applause is due to Laura Martinez, Lucy De Leon, Kim Garcia, Maridelle Acero, and Christine Romeo (and others I'm sure) whose work made the event so successful. You'll see I've attached some of the PowerPoint presentations from the day to this email.

Committing to Equity

Frank Harris suggested in his keynote address that there are four quadrants of equity—those who wish to increase equity (or not) and those who know how to do so (or not). While many of us were in 9c, another group of faculty were off at the Equity Summit hosted by Skyline College in the bay area. Michelle Sampat accompanied faculty from several divisions, including Senate co-

VP Serena Ott, Julie Bray-Ali, Carol Impara, Carolyn Robinson, Jaime Rodriguez, Mica Stewart, Lina Soto, and Antoine Thomas to learn more concrete practices that can be used by faculty and the college as a whole to produce equitable outcomes for *all* our students.



The Inclusion Summit included a student panel that helped attendees better appreciate the very real challenges faced by many of our students.

The Streets of Bakersfield

Pathways work (later, *Guided* Pathways, and later still Guided Pathways for *Success*) is not new to Mt. SAC which, along with Bakersfield College and Irvine Valley College, was one of the first three California community colleges to commit to enhancing student success through re-engineering college processes to be transparent and accessible to our many students who have no family members to guide their progress into and through college (a shout out to Student Services for last week's 1st Gen Week activities). A key part of helping students with that process is the curriculum mapping that many Mt. SAC departments have completed. For transfer students, that map should include guidance about their transition to four-year colleges. Mt. SAC students are very lucky to have almost a dozen CSU and UC campuses within a hundred-mile radius, but that makes it more difficult to guide students to the most prudent course selections. Bakersfield College hosted an all-day conference for colleges working on *that* challenge, and Mt. SAC counselors Diana Felix, Jason Hayward, and Patricia Maestro (as well as AVP Joumana McGowan) weren't in 9C or San Mateo—they were in Bakersfield.



The GPS breakout at the Inclusion Summit reviewed and discussed the actual circuitous “pathways” that have led many to Mt. SAC, often after overcoming significant obstacles elsewhere.

A New Paradigm for Assessment?

As some of you know, I served as a Commissioner on the ACCJC for several years, and I have since begun a three-year term as the ACCJC-appointed to WASC. Despite my service on the Commission, I have long believed that California community colleges invest a great deal of time and effort into an assessment regime that produces little positive value. There are disciplines where our course-focused approach is *very* valuable—highly linear CTE programs come to mind. But on the whole, it has seemed to me that more time and expense is devoted to gathering and inputting data into software repositories than is devoted to interpreting the results and making changes to improve student learning. WASC-accredited schools are also expected to assess student learning, but there is none of the course-focused myopia that characterizes California community colleges, and Outcomes Committee co-chair Loni Nguyen and committee member Chris Jackson attended the WASC Assessment 101 Workshop at Pomona College on Friday. They weren't in 9C, or San Bruno, or Bakersfield—they were in Claremont.

Psychology Day!

And finally, many of our colleagues weren't in 9C—they were elsewhere on campus celebrating Psychology Day. I have slowly been making my way around campus to department meetings, learning faculty names and matching them to faces, and by coincidence, I met the Psychology Department last Thursday afternoon. Thursday evening, Psych Department chair Stacy Bacigalupi joined President Scroggins, Senate co-VP Lance Heard, and me at a ceremony organized to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Campaign for College Opportunity at the City View Penthouse in downtown LA. The Campaign's first major project was support for AB 1440, the bill that gave birth to Associate Degrees for Transfer. The Departments of Psychology and Administration of Justice were early adopters of Associate Degrees for Transfer, which have proven to be very effective in helping students earn a Mt. SAC degree and successfully transfer to a CSU campus. As you've seen from information President Scroggins has shared in Cabinet Notes,

those students have been more effective than CSU native students in completing bachelor's degrees in a timely way. The following link will tell you more about the award President Scroggins received on behalf of the campus (the gentleman on Bill's immediate right is former-California Senator, Alex Padilla, the author of SB 1440): https://www.mtsac.edu/newsroom/news/posts/champions_higher_ed.html

I also learned more about Stacy's own experience—like mine and so many people on campus—as a first-generation college student. (My own first-gen experience is described here: <https://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/news/first-gen-kid.html>).

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One day, five extended conversations about ways we can better serve our students. Some were large (9C was full) while some were small (I'm excited to learn what Loni & Chris learned). Some were on campus (Psychology Day) and some were farther afield (Bakersfield & San Mateo). And for all I know, there were other conversations last Friday that I remain ignorant of. We have an embarrassment of riches in smart and dedicated faculty, staff, and managers (and we work *well* as a team)—though we also face challenges in sharing what we learned on a campus in which so *many* conversations transpire in a single day.



9C was quite full of faculty staff, and students who came to participate.

As we pass the middle of November, Thanksgiving is on the horizon with only one week of classes and final exams thereafter. I will continue visiting departments and looking for ways to facilitate the sharing of your good ideas of meeting the needs of our students. I welcome your thoughts on the subject and look forward to meeting those of you I haven't met yet.

(Note that the preceding is also included as an attachment, along with some of the Inclusion Summit PowerPoint presentations.)