

Basic Skills Committee

Thurs. Feb. 6, 2014

2:00-3:00 Room 902

Minutes

BSI Coordinator Melissa Reeve called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

Roll: Genele Rhoads, Corrine Kirkbride, Karen McCord, Sandra Moore, Melissa Reeve, Josh Scott, Chuck Spillner, Barbara Villatoro

I. Approve minutes from: Jan. 16

Approved

II. Budget update (If any—still awaiting information from our 1/16 proposal)

Three weeks ago Melissa submitted the BSI Committee four-point proposal request to: designate one-third of the Strategic Proposal funds for BSI ; give the BSI Committee direct decision making for BSI proposals; move Committee approved proposals directly to the President's Cabinet; move BSI approved and successful projects, such as FYE, out of the proposal process and institutionalize their funding. Melissa contacted all the administrators, but just received IVP White's response that administrators have not met to discuss this and it is too late to combine the requests with the Strategic Proposal process. IVP White suggested all proposals be submitted to the regular funding stream so they'll be in the queue. IVP White also stated that, absent a final decision, new proposals are needed for past BSI funded programs, such as FYE, Umoja, ASC, etc. Committee members were frustrated this response wasn't received three weeks ago. Melissa was unsure how much extra work will be needed with the new Strategic Proposal forms with only eight days left to complete a lot of work. The Committee submitted its proposal in a timely way and Melissa will inquire if the holiday deadline can be extended. Karen checked the Strategic Proposal form and noted it is similar to last year.

Corrine asked what would happen in cases where a proposal isn't written for a program, FYE for example, but the Educational Master Plan includes it. It seems unreasonable that faculty have to apply again for funding for a program listed in the EMP. In addition to Corrine's concern, Melissa announced she just sent in the application for a team to attend the Evergreen Institute. BSI earmarked funds, the College agreed, and S/P Laguerre authorized payment of around \$25,000 for team attendance. That investment can't be made without already having decided the campus is willing to support it. However, Karen pointed out after the last attendance at Evergreen Institute, which promotes the advantages of integration, all learning communities were cancelled, except Umoja. Melissa noted LR 10 is the only learning community, other than Umoja, currently at the College. Although the College has been under scrutiny for poor planning, people still have to scramble for projects.

Melissa will communicate with S/P Laguerre and Dean Peter Cammish. In the meantime, the Committee needs to think about how to work on applications while waiting for answers. There is already enough lost time for the proposal process. Corrine will upload FYE as a Google doc and faculty can make changes that everyone can see.

Josh queried if writing labs that are part of ASC should be proposed separately or together. Melissa replied that, with the BSI coordinator positions fully billed to BSI funds, no money is left for the Committee to decide on any projects or proposals. Josh pointed out how the BSI group has positively impacted the campus, empowering faculty and students through approval and funding of projects and he questioned the rationale of having coordinators at this point. Melissa agreed the last semester has been very frustrating as time had to be used working on attempted resolution to this major funding change. Although coordinators do other work outside of the centralized Committee, there would not be a need to meet more than once a month to discuss what is happening.

Karen stressed BSI funds are for directly impacting students. More funds are needed and the College must reevaluate and commit to student success. Karen pointed out it is not good use of her time to write the same proposals again and again in different ways. She queried at what point it is OK to continue on without having to put so much time and energy into an application process.

Josh stated that a lot of the BSI math and English coordinator functions are administrative along with leading the charge on things like curriculum changes. The whole point of BSI in the beginning was to infuse time and money into things that really make changes. Although someone should be watching over BSI English, Math and ESL, there needs to be more functions to validate paying the coordinator positions. When Melissa met with IVP White in December, it seemed like the BSI Coordinator became a department chair as the only person with some paid time to move departmental issues forward. Josh and Michael Wyly ended up being the lead writers for the English program review, Michael Wyly is the division level coordinator with a kind of quasi admin role, and they both ended up functioning like chairs, which is not their job. Department chairs should be separate positions. As Melissa conveyed to the Committee in January, she spoke with different administrators who all agreed BSI funds are for direct support of students and the College is also needs to fund Basic Skills as one of its central missions. That was one reason she had been optimistic about Committee suggestions to combine BSI proposals with the Strategic Proposal process. Unfortunately the window of opportunity passed over the three week waiting time.

Although there is no separate process at this time for Basic Skills proposals, the future process is unknown. Josh recommended Melissa send an email to all faculty, including the reasons for the change and the need to send all proposals to the Strategic Proposal process, because many people will be waiting for the BSI call for proposals. Melissa stated there is approximately \$300,000 from general funds for Strategic Proposals and the balance is specifically from a CTE funding source.

Melissa asked the other BSI funded coordinators their opinions about their positions, if the current billing situation continues. Josh recommended ending the current positions and finding another way

to support BSI with College funds. There are huge divisions without College support for BSI coordinators or for chairs. Melissa reported the current year College BSI budget also decreased from \$118,000 to \$107,000, due to decreased BSI enrollments. This occurred mainly because English 360 wasn't coded properly to be identified as a Basic Skills course. The correction has been made. A follow-up memo came from Barbara Illowsky at the Chancellor's Office noting many schools have introduced accelerated courses that weren't coded properly. Melissa will contact Barbara to see if the state funding can also be corrected. Many Solano College students take English 360.

The Governor proposed a generous funding increase for colleges, of which BSI is a major part. With SB 1456 and some mandates about starting students early in Basic Skills courses, some things have funds tied to them that are not necessarily understood yet at this campus. Barbara Fountain and Shirley Lewis will have more clarity on where the money is specifically tied. For now, there is only \$107,000 available here and answers are needed soon including, if coordinator positions will have to go through another hiring process if the Committee decides to continue with them. Karen pointed out a vehicle is needed, such as coordinators, to address things involved with funds. Josh opined losing all the positions wouldn't be good, but all the funds can't be used for coordinators. Melissa will send an email to Finance VP Yulian Ligioso to report the current structure is useless without funding. In the meantime, proposals need to be written again.

III. Quick updates on current activities:

- a. NSILC Application: Melissa**
- b. English Basic Skills Working Group: Josh**
- c. Math Embedded tutors: Genele**
- d. Learning Communities: Karen, Isabel, Amanda?**

Updates deferred.

IV. Math concerns from Umoja Program: Karen

At the last meeting, Karen spoke about the phenomenal English success in Umjoa last fall and the struggle with math due to some non-supportive instructors. Karen reported the math success rate isn't good overall and a solution is needed. Members discussed the De Anza College program.

V. Strategic Proposals: Ideas from the group?

Something similar to the De Anza College program could be proposed, with a learning community that includes a counselor and teacher in math class and with students spending twice as much time in math for the same amount of units. De Anza has had good success rates over many years. An email was also received from American River College (ARC) but it was not clear how similar or different their program is. One key difference to success that Karen finds when students are struggling is to have teachers willing to work with them and their tutors. There are students who say they do fine in their class and also great students who are challenged with instructors who aren't willing to work with them. For students who took classes to transfer to state, things went the other way. Some people have tried to speak with and help teachers who haven't cooperated. Buy-in is needed from math teachers to work with counselors

and be interested in student success. Students are flunking, they can't transfer, enter the workplace, or qualify for financial aid and something has to be done.

Genele reported full-timers tend to be more available and involved but 62% of math is taught by adjuncts. Corrine pointed out the math department is low on instructors and on the hiring list. Sandra opined it isn't just an issue of adjuncts but about instructors willing and committed to working with students. Melissa noted getting funding to have a program and pay someone might be a start to getting more full-time instructors. Corrine replied that full-time teachers have to teach transfer level as well and it is hard and adjuncts don't have five office hours a week or an office.

Karen had requested a stipend from BSI for an adjunct to have time to meet with Umoja staff and have office hours for students. That has to be incorporated into whatever is done for collaboration time with full-time or part-time instructors.

The program model has a five hour math class and five hour lab, it is well thought out with defined regulations, students also take a counseling class, and they are taken out of the program if they don't commit. De Anza has an 80% success rate but faculty need rotation due to burn out. Melissa suggested having an adjunct paid for five extra hours, as long as it isn't overload. Corrine stated the success rate is worth one class with 30 students per instructor. Karen added that the College is currently funding failure with a 26% pass rate.

Josh suggested De Anza faculty be invited here for discussion. He also pointed out, if measured by persistence, the numbers drop. Karen noted that students traumatized by math experience won't register this semester. That is a major barrier and problem that impacts everything, including enrollments. A successful math program is needed.

Corrine noted that students often come into College math classes with past bad experience. There is a negative cultural view of math and a different type of person generally teaches math. Melissa pointed out the De Anza program addresses the importance of having all types of people, not leaving math entirely in the hands of mathematicians, but also counselors. Karen added that counseling covers other areas too, such as student success, motivation, study skills, etc. and seems to fit with some counseling courses already here. The plan is to use counseling class again for Summer Bridge as those are some of the issues. Math instructors often have difficulty relating to students. Corrine stated assessment and students not doing their work are major problems. Teachers can't dictate what students take, suggestions aren't always accepted, and those students are often unsuccessful. No matter how much time students put into a class, without the basics they won't do well.

Melissa announced the union and S/P Laguerre approved an MOU last week to hire an FYE coordinator. Funds were also approved for a counselor. Melissa will check into the hiring status and Karen will check into the ARC program. Questions and comments came up regarding submitting a program proposal:

- New courses might be needed if lab is required.
- For a ten-hour class funding would be for a teacher and tutor for five hours and a counselor for the second five hours.

- Space could be an issue, most classes are in the morning with no more space available and FYE has to be figured out first. Could this be incorporated with FYE?
- Students at De Anza are required to take counseling after failing twice.
- Discuss this for summer to have a similar option in a student's second semester with intensive effort; there may be a way of building it in, if FYE and this program were incorporated together.
- Place FYE students in assessed classes, if not successful in their first year, pool together the next semester to launch that program.
- Combined programs would have a new scale of students. The low rates of Basic Skills math student success through transfer level means a majority of students never complete what they need in order to get a degree or transfer. Think about what we've started and look at what else is out there. Don't say it can't be done due to costs. Find the way.
- About twelve English 360 students who came back for second semester already left. Without extra support or a contract, nothing changed. Having students commit to be somewhere and doing homework with someone tutoring them with any class would make a difference. Doing 10 units a week for a 5 hour class on site would make a huge difference. This would include a restructuring of how students do homework, having access to an instructor, counselor and space.
- In 2006 a Partnership for Excellence grant paid for half of an instructor's salary. Write a proposal based on a model with costs and work out particulars later. A collaboration during the summer for whoever does it would make a tremendous difference to have support in the classroom.
- Students would have an out of classroom resource as well.
- Embedded tutors have been underutilized.
- Students are packing schedules but this would require them to build in time for support.
- Umoja tutors do hours in one place, so when students drop in they can see someone.
- Over the course of time, people will want to do this and then they'll have more motivation and drive.
- Students are interviewed and in the right mindset.
- Ensure students are committed and they don't overload themselves.

Melissa thanked everyone for the valuable discussion. This item only came to her attention yesterday. The math concerns raised are important and the solution could maybe start here. Barbara Villatoro is willing to teach the program. It may be best to start something in spring 2015 beginning with a non-passing group.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.