

WE&DC Program Manager Focus Group – January 12, 2017

Attendees: Marcy Jackson, Cathy Giovannetti, Eric Myren, Karla Nabors, Karen Thomas, Samantha Veneruso, Melissa Gregory, Transcie Almonte-Sabio, Eunice Melo, Rabbie Awan, Karen Ambrose, Debbie Crutchfield, Natasha Sachs

Standard III – question 2

- How do you communicate WD&CE offerings? Through the schedule of classes, tab on website, flyers for different programs throughout the year and semester, put hard copy of the schedule in admissions, MC county libraries, worksource Montgomery, hold community info sessions at community engagement centers, social media, offer courses through CPOD as well for the college community. Work closely with welcome centers and student access centers. Speak to recruiters, and offer classes at multiple locations. Customer Service also answers 75-80 calls per day. Karla Nabors goes to MCPS 5 times per year to give presentations on back to school nights. There is also a marketing committee that works with IA to advertise on television, or at least to include mention of WD& CE in regular advertisements. We also work directly with organizations for at risk youth, chambers of commerce, HOC. We work directly with employers, so we communicate offerings directly to them through advisory board meetings, industry partnership meetings, and direct mail to past and potential students' homes and businesses. We also communicate with governmental agencies, through grants, real estate commission and federal agencies – we have lots of MOU with them. Additionally, we forward ads and electronic brochures to business partners. Karen we also communicate through the college cable channel, casa de Maryland, McHale. There is also a community outreach radio show with Gloria Bonilla, blast e-mails. Specific newspapers – MC county catalog for seniors and *El Pregonero*. We also advertise on the Spanish Channel on TV in Spanish. We participate in open houses at churches and at Gold's gyms.
 - How do you communicate specific program requirements to students? We hold information sessions, advertisements list prerequisites & contact info as well. We also have a book put together that is a separate manual – resource guide; includes the courses and programs – beyond the normal advertisement. It is on the WDCE website. GED program – we have 1-hour long orientation sessions that students must attend before they register, then placement tests, so they know the requirements & steps. The course schedule also provides contact information for program directors. (Rabbie will e-mail this). Each program's process will be a little different than the others. MHEC requires that syllabus and learning outcomes be posted through the CC10 process (community college course development forms). State funding is based on fundable FTE, course descriptions are approved by the state through the CC10 process (Linda Griffin). This is public information that students can access.

Standard IV

- What are specific support systems/services provided for WD&CE students? EOC that we work with; students wishing to return to college who want to obtain a degree go to this center for additional counseling & financial aid. We have transition coordinator and career coaches on each side. Students can make individual appointments as well as attend workshops. We offer Job prep skills courses for IT students; instructors mentor the students 1 on 1 and have them turn in goals and plans. Often programs work with Natalie Martinez with DSS services. She is also bilingual and provides support in that way. We also have central support for interpreters in the classrooms. We also collaborate with the credit side in Germantown on orientation sessions. Recruiters are also available to us through enrollment services. We take students to welcome centers, particularly if they are close to earning their GED. We invite welcome center staff to also come to the classes to make presentations. MCjobs resource is excellent for our students. If they complete their CDL license, employer partners post jobs on our ejobs. We also use career coach to help students research careers, create resumes. Customer service teams at each of the 5 locations to help answer individual students' questions. We also work with Combat 2 College. We submit courses approved for veterans. We have someone at each campus to share information with students at all locations. Some have also served on a "serving the community" committee to help work with veterans about credit and noncredit courses to help get them acclimated. We also do co-listed courses. Students can take the same course for credit or non-credit. Some students access the library more and have been getting IDs so that they can access the rest of the College's resources (tutoring, bus, computer labs, etc). These services are loosely linked together – it would be better if there was something more structured in place to make these resources more widely known. Sometimes welcome center staff feel they need to come up with a different level of presentation for ESOL students. Students can be intimidated by the college environment, so more outreach and services that would be easier for them to access would be helpful.
 - What is lacking? Counseling, social services assistance – financial assistance (students often don't have \$90 for GED courses); there are no scholarships or financial aid for non-credit courses. There is a grant for lower level students. There is a list from Donna Pina that is used – provided by donors who designate programs for the use of those funds. Many students struggle with real life circumstances that prevent them from taking advantage of the funds. Lower level GED ESOL classes are free, but when they get to the upper level, they have to pay for those, and students can't afford them. Students need more financial literacy support to plan and prepare for funding. A lot of courses don't qualify for the tuition installment program. If courses run 3 weeks or fewer, they don't qualify because of the short running time of the course. Community Engagement Centers do some additional support as well (noted by Melissa Gregory). We reach out to the corrections system and detention centers as well. (GED, digital literacy, food services, technology are some of the courses offered at these locations). Mental Health & personal counseling is a big need. Workforce counseling is also needed. Unless this is built in, students take a class and don't know what the next step is. This has become part of the job function of program directors- but this is hours and hours of time. If we had counselors on site or workforce development coordinators, this would be easier.

Counseling also varies from program to program – some have in person career coaches; others must rely only on the electronic career coach. Natalie Martinez is wonderful, but she supports everyone and is located at RV. More advising would be helpful. Being able to work with an advisor on the credit side to look at the class schedule rather than simply punting questions directly to us would be great. Need a stronger linkage with the credit advising so they can do more thorough WD&CE advising. Seems to be a competitive environment between credit and non-credit that can have a negative impact. Dept. chairs and credit counselors need to better understand what we do so that they can talk about both programs and help students make better decisions for them: “Do I need a full degree, or can I just take a couple of courses to meet my goals?” The Program Managers ask, “how much do academic counselors know about WD&CE programs?” We have customer service on every campus, but for the student to have more transparency or structure on other opportunities and pathways would be helpful – right now its divisive rather than showing different opportunities credit and noncredit provide. We are all the same college, but we don’t collaborate and share resources to make it easier for students. Students who don’t speak English but have degrees don’t know how to link into careers and career preparation. They may just need a little boost from WD&CE. We could be more collaborative and make it easier and more focused for students. Many students don’t need a degree; they just need to get a job – something they can work with immediately. We need to focus on what students need now, not just what they need in the future. Noncredit students don’t have the guidance in terms of assessing their strengths and previous careers to help them navigate where they might go next. There is a career exploration course on the credit side, but there is nothing formal like this on the non-credit side. Career counseling at the entry point would be helpful. Sometimes outside agencies follow this information, but there’s not always follow up from us once we’re here. Money drives some of these decisions (credit gives students financial aid money when non-credit doesn’t – so some enroll in a 1 year program rather than the shorter WDCE program that could prepare them for a job now –added by Melissa Gregory). How do we market the difference between a credit certificate program and a WD&CE completed program? WD&CE is often weeks to 3 months. State license might just be 60-70 hours to complete. For example, the Tech hire grant funded program gives certificates and diplomas for students who want to pursue IT. These are classes that students can take this now but will ultimately need a degree moving forward – the 3 week class helps them to figure out what they eventually want to do. Scheduling – is affected by the dynamics of students’ lives. Our ability to be flexible with the schedule allows students to be more successful because we can modify course offerings very quickly. In rare cases we can even shift schedules for students- the instructor and program director can work directly with students to meet their needs more directly – you don’t have to stick to the original plan. We teach from 7am- 9:30pm – all the time. Sunday classes as well.

Standard VII:

- How do administrative structural changes support inclusivity and communication? WD&CE hasn't had extensive restructuring. They gained a dean for the trades area. We also have an open operations director position (not recruited or filled – we had to send those responsibilities to others – this was difficult for program directors). We're doing a business processes review for sustainability. We've also lost program directors in some restructures -- those duties or programs have been given to others on top of their regular duties. We may not know some of the higher level administrative structuring. It is a tremendous strain for program directors when positions aren't hired; it becomes supervising and overseeing faculty, marketing. (this perspective may be different for administrators). There is no training happening for some people taking on some of these new responsibilities. (we've had retirements not filled, haven't necessarily lost positions). We have communication about these new positions, but we don't have training (how do you serve as an interim program director – what do you do?). This sometimes forces us to restructure how we work in other units. We are looking at sustainability and maintaining agility; there is a trickle-down effect for every position that isn't filled – that's what we experience. We get the job done, but we could do that smarter. We could look at daily business processes. Unlike the credit side, every person here is a program creator, manager, salesperson, content developer, counselor – they do everything. This is an education that isn't happening well enough. We run each program as its own business and take care of all of those program needs.
 - Did the one college concept change how you perceive the college and how we perceive you? There is an openness among new hires in HR and other staff – they have a fresh lens, but that's still rare. WDCE feels like step children to the college at times; we're left out of major decisions that affect us; we don't know about change until it's happening – lack of communication. (The perspective might be different for Ed Roberts and his program team, who have recently shifted to WD&CE). We don't have 1 dean, different deans communicate and respond differently. There are inroads being made for education between credit and noncredit – hoping for greater collaboration. Governance has the ability to facilitate some of that and bring everybody to the table to share and discuss issues and have some participation. Utilization of space could be improved. We sometimes need access to space held by different departments, and it can be difficult to get. Timing is also a challenge for input. The semester calendar is not in sync with our workflow – the collegewide emails go out at times that are busy for us, we miss notifications because it doesn't fit our workflow. The timing of information can prevent communication. It's hard to be included in something you can't give your attention to because it's not your priority. There is now a conscious effort to include WD&CE in governance and other committees. It's great that we're being included, but we also need to be heard, and we often are not. The new webpage design – they said we needed to change our name because it was too long for the tab, rather than understanding who we are. We're so far down the road, we're being told it's another year before we are represented. Space is an issue for us – can we use the weight room 1 Saturday 6 months from now. Credit managers ask noncredit program directors to send them our instructor's resume before we can schedule classes in some spaces.

Credit shouldn't have a say in determining who we can hire for an individual class - this is a communication gap.

- Samantha asks everyone to send her information on processes they use to hire qualified faculty.

Standard I

- As a group, they felt that the Mission is clear & WD&CE is part of it.

Standard II

- Question 1: Part time faculty can do 36 hours per week (1500 per year); we must adhere to ACA compliance hours for all instructors. There is a contractual agreement with faculty for SESH – We can contract with faculty for part time instruction work; there are hours attached to that work. Part time instructors are able to join the SEIU; there are no full time faculty.

Standard VI –

There are some collaborations between budgets during the year, but each program area has its own fund and plans accordingly. The WD&CE finance director has been pressing for more detailed analysis down to FTE for program areas to look at their actuals for what they'll do for the year out and for allowable growth. We put a conservative 2% in our budget for growth, but we often exceed that, and our enrollments are up. No coordinating with budget/planning on credit side. Although Ed Roberts' areas may be an exception and report to George Payne.

Standard III – question 1

- We look at educational credentials, are potential faculty working in the field; for example, do real estate agents have their licensing (GRE), where do they fit in the spectrum, years of experience, educational background? In IT faculty have to be working in the field with an industry certification. Each program has its own set criteria. We may ask candidates to do a teaching demonstration as part of the hiring process.
 - Is there a set process for evaluation? Yes, we have them, but they are program specific. Can you send us some of those materials? They will email them. We have instructional support trainers and they evaluate faculty and do ongoing formal and informal evaluations. Because we work with MVA for some programs, we work with state evaluations – the state evaluates our instructors as well -same for real estate agents. We can go through the checklists, but until we work with them, we don't know if they work well. They have to be able to work within how our system operates – work independently, use MC email. It might take a few classes – we sit in and do student observations – some program managers physically visits classes each semester. We also do student evaluations for every class. We have flexibility because we have part time faculty members – if they're not working out, we can let our faculty go by not renewing their contract – more flexible than full time faculty.

Standard II –

Question 2: done by program area – the unit doesn't keep a WD&CE portal of information. Some metrics are completed because they have to report them for grant funded programs – some of these have detailed required reporting. There isn't a uniform portal for tracking them. It's a large number of students 8-10,000 students per year. We may know how many students go to credit courses as well. George Payne may have a larger database that he maintains, but we've never seen one. Tracking students can require SSN, and that can be tricky.

Standard VII – we have regular WD&CE communication, biannual, quarterly meetings, org chart. Can someone send the link for the org chart? (Already sent by Cathy Giovannetti)

Standard III – question 3

- State and industry requirements, students feedback on evaluations. May vary between programs. Karen Ambrose is a primary contact for MHEC – part of a group that collects and maintains on an annual basis all of our course certifications across the state.