

## Achieving the Dream Strategies

### I. Financial Aid –

A. HCCS is considering engagement of the services of ACS, a company that helps students apply for financial aid via 24-hour telephone assistance. Their services concentrate on the “intake” processes of application and documentation. Once assembled, the information is turned over to the college’s financial aid personnel to complete the “packaging” processes. We are looking at implementing the ACS services first at Central College. One strategy might be to look at the results of a random group of students who utilize the ACS services versus a group of students who do not.

B. A strategy that emerged from our focus group of staff members on financial aid suggested that we train a special cadre of student ambassadors to provide “hands-on” assistance to other students, also on the “in-take” procedures – application and documentation. We would hire these student ambassadors for x number of hours per week to work at stations set up in malls, libraries, CBOs, grocery stores, etc. to reach out to students and later provide personal follow-up to ensure the packaging occurs. We would then measure results for these students versus students who proceed through our regular processes.

II. Learning Support – the following strategies might be limited to a set number of classes at a particular college to measure against students in same classes at the same college that do not receive the strategy:

A. Service Learning – several courses are already integrating Service Learning. Does it contribute to greater student success in terms of retention, better grades, attainment of certificates and degrees? We could study its impact on student participants versus non-participants.

B. Learning Communities – this strategy has been touted in the literature as the one having the greatest impact on retention and success. A strategy might be to link designated GUST sections with other course sections (e.g., psychology, sociology, a particular workforce course, etc.) for co-enrollment of students and co-planning of a set number of activities, assignments, etc.

C. Tutoring – this strategy could offer students in designated sections additional opportunities for tutoring. The tutoring could be offered in a variety of formats: on-line, one on one, group sessions, etc.

D. On-line services – this strategy was suggested to offer students a special, easier means to access an array of services, whatever the students might need - career counseling, financial aid, advising, mentoring, tutoring, job placement, etc.- in an on-line format that would include ease of access, text messaging, email, chat rooms, web broadcasts, etc.

E. Additional lab hour for ENGL 0310 – much like we added an hour lab session to MATH 0312, the suggestion has been made to add an hour of lab instruction to ENGL 0310 to provide additional “hands-on” time for writing instruction.

F. Student Mentors – Hire and train more “successful” students, those who have earned 30+ SCH as Student Mentors; assign them to new students to provide general assistance in locating and receiving the services they need; serve for general counsel and advice.

G. Review Sessions – During the weeks of registration and testing, hold math and writing review sessions to help students prepare for the assessment test to ensure they are placed in proper level of course work.

H. Restructure of Developmental Math courses – to combine four weeks of MATH 0101 during which special focus may be placed on specific skills deficiencies of students (a “Math Boot Camp”) with an accelerated 12 week course of MATH 0306, 0308, or 0312 as appropriate.

I. Identification of Students with Learning Disabilities who have been placed in GUST or other developmental courses and providing alternative courses/paths (e.g., VAST Program) that may be more appropriate.

### III. Tracking of Student Progress

A. Adult Education students – as a means of increasing the numbers of Adult Ed students who transition to college enrollment, it is proposed that HCCS increase the number of GED testing sessions with special orientation sessions. HCC would waive the \$46 test fee for those students who agree up-front to attend the orientation session introducing them to the college and its programs and services, including financial aid. After attendance and contact information provided for follow-up, the students would receive a voucher to take the GED test at HCCS. We will track these students to see how many of them subsequently enroll in HCCS, complete the semester successfully, re-enroll in following semesters, complete developmental education, and earn a certificate or degree.

B. Life-mapping – much like the software program utilized at Valencia Community College in Florida, this strategy would entail development and use of an electronic means for tracking first time in college students through a series of designated steps we have identified for student success. (We would need to fully develop the “life map” in terms of paper and hand processes first before programming or adoption of a software. This would be a true “fleshing-out” of our student success model.) We would introduce students to the series of steps (the life map) in GUST 0303, in our literature, our web site, our activities with high schools, etc. The Life Map might look something like this:

1. Student visits with a Counselor.
2. College Application.
3. Application for Financial Aid.
4. Student files HS transcript; other college transcripts as applicable.
5. Assessment Testing.
6. Individual Student Success Plan (TSI Plan) for developmental students.
7. Career Exploration.
8. Declaration of Major.
9. Student visits with Faculty Adviser.
10. Registration for initial semester.

11. Filing of Degree Plan.
12. Visit with Adviser at least once each semester.
13. Early warning and interventions as applicable.
14. Completion of developmental education.
15. Completion of core curriculum or workforce certificates.
16. Completion of associate degree.
17. Transfer.
18. Job Placement.

C. ACT Pilot Study – We utilize the ACT instruments – ASSET and COMPASS. HISD is introducing the ACT instruments EXPLORE (8<sup>th</sup> grade) and PLAN (10<sup>th</sup> grade) that are correlated with ASSET and COMPASS. This will allow us to identify students early-on who are ready for dual credit (by 11<sup>th</sup> grade) and those who are not and thus might be targeted to developmental ed while still in high school. We could devise a strategy to start working with students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, one group “on target” for dual credit, and another group, not on target.

D. Recapture of students who started college, but dropped out/stopped out prior to completion of certificate and/or degree. Identify group (through our data, perhaps in partnership with Coordinating Board) of students and solicit and aid their re-entry; compare to control group with similar demographics non-solicited and not receiving special assistance.