

Plenary Report
November 15, 2017
Eric Thompson

1st General Session: Guided Pathways: What's Next?

In this session we heard from the 6 panelists about guided pathways. Tension between the emcee, Carrie Roberson of Butte College, and Vice Chancellor Laura Hope was immediately apparent. Laura Hope is the Chancellor's chief advocate of the Vision for Success. Carrie Roberson is a faculty member who is aware of, and sympathetic to, some objections to the Vision, also the chair of the ASCCC Guided Pathways Task Force. Faculty panelists Kate Browne and Jesse Raskin, both of Skyline College, recounted the process their college went through to implement Guided Pathways, beginning with the lengthy self-study to determine what the problem was and what they wanted from the idea. We also heard from Chase Fischerhall, of Career Ladders Project (and history faculty), who is a Guided Pathways enthusiast, and who was the chief facilitator at the Guided Pathways workshop we went to.

1st Breakout: Critical Conversations around the Guided Pathways Award Program

In this breakout, the Guided Pathways theme continued but with opportunities to interact. Laura Hope began with a spiel about "taking the luck out" of a successful college career by implementing GP. We're failing our students when they take too long, take excess units, don't graduate, don't get a job in their chosen field, etc. She castigated those who "deny the data." In this session, many attendees voiced a variety of misgivings, frustrations, and criticisms of the Vision for Success Awards Program. Laura Hope vigorously defended the Vision, averred that the timeline for the rolling out of the awards program was generous already—had already been extended (in response to protests that it is too fast), and repeated that it is immoral to look at the data and say we are best serving our students (not acknowledging that there are legitimate objections to the way the data is constructed and interpreted). One attendee made the point that we already have many successful "guided pathways" like Puente and EOPS, to which Vice Chancellor Hope said, "The problem is that those programs only serve small groups of students. We need to structurally institute luck into it. We need to institute nudging students to keep them on the path and it has to be all students, not just a few small groups."

Two gems came out of this breakout that emphasize the necessity for faculty leadership. Laura Hope said, "Tenured faculty own; everybody else rents." And, asked if the Academic Senate President refuses to sign the Awards documents, she said, "No money goes to any college where the Academic Senate President won't sign off on it." This indicates that the Chancellor's office at least appears to understand the importance of faculty, especially the Academic Senate, in taking a leading role in what GP will look like. It seems to bind the purveyors of the Vision to collegially cooperate with faculty viewpoints, to the necessity of convincing us. But it also simultaneously places political pressure on senates to compromise or cave in to get the money.

2nd Breakout: A Fully Online Community College? An Update on the Work of the FLOW Workgroup.

The two faculty members on the FLOW Workgroup, Cheryl Aschenbach and Michelle Pilati regaled us with an horrific account of the process that created a proposal in response to the governor's call for an all-online 115th California Community College. From the point of view of the faculty on the workgroup, there are many potential harms in this idea, and their input was largely ignored. One example: They

pointed out to the Chancellor that FLOW would harm the enrollments of many other colleges, even threaten their existence, to which the Chancellor replied that he didn't care about that and it was asking the wrong question. Ask not how it will harm other colleges, but how it will help students. They pointed out that if smaller, rural colleges were put out of business by the fully online college, it will leave those communities without any face to face college instruction. There are many other problems as well, including that, arguably, the main target population of this service wouldn't be particularly helped by it.

2nd General Session: Cecelia Estolano, President, Board of Governors

President Estolano gave tribute to the colleges affected by the wildfires, most especially SRJC, and also showcased examples of excellence, especially our own Anne Belden, Journalism Professor and Oakleaf Supervisor for her and her student's work in reporting on the fires. In the midst of this showcasing of California Community College excellence, she gave an encomium to The Vision for Success, and said that it was to implement something like The Vision that Chancellor Oakley was chosen by the Board of Governors. She said that SSSP has made small progress, but it has not been fast enough. She said that people deal with change one of three ways: freeze and dodge; scapegoat and lash out; or walk into the storm and shape it to your value system. "We at the Board of Governors," she said, "embrace the third one." Afterwards I talked to her and gave her a copy of the essay by Alexa Forrester and myself.

3rd Breakout: Vision for Success: Local Implications

In this session, meant to be primarily a discussion, led by the President and Vice President of ASCCC, and attended by Cecelia Estolano and two other Board of Governors members, the facilitators projected the six goals of the Vision for Success and asked, hopefully, if they were uncontroversial. I offered that they were not. The one I objected to was the goal to reduce the average number of units students take. I was asked by Julie Bruno to elaborate, and I did. Students take extra units for all kinds of good reasons. True, some take extra units because they don't have a clear direction, haven't been well advised, are confused, etc., but no one can pretend to know how many are those students versus students who knowingly, deliberately, with full consciousness and acute wisdom take extra units for the extra skills and knowledge. Immediately hands raised all over the room, and the majority of the faculty in the breakout supported and elaborated on my point and it dominated the rest of the discussion. Supporters of the Vision said things like, that many of our students don't have the luxury to wander the curriculum and explore; they can't afford it, they need jobs; to oppose the Vision is to enshrine and perpetuate white privilege, etc. It was a very lively session.

4th Breakout: Hot Topics for Online Education

In this discussion, many aspects of online instruction were explored, and various people shared ideas and asked questions about accessibility, evaluations, qualifications and others. We shared ideas about how Distance Education fits into shared governance. One of the salient points made is that Distance Ed should be considered 10 + 1 and be under the Academic Senate, and not, as in some districts, considered tech and under IT.

Area Meetings and 5th Breakout.

I had written a resolution, which was discussed during the Area meetings and addressed with a speech by John Stankas (ASCCC Vice President) to the whole assembled Area B contingent, and addressed by Julie Bruno (ASCCC President) to me in several private conversations. The upshot of these conversations and declarations prompted me to amend my own resolution. I took the fifth breakout off to do so, since the deadline for amendments to resolutions was 4:00 that day (Friday, Nov. 3).

The final form of the resolutions passed by ASCCC was published yesterday and can be found here:

ASCCC Resolutions, Fall 2017: <https://asccc.org/resources/resolutions>

The full text of my resolution, as well as four other resolutions related to Guided Pathways, The Vision, and Faculty voice and leadership are culled here:

Resolutions on *The Vision for Success* and “Guided Pathways”

<https://asccc.org/resolutions/call-faculty-leadership-implementing-vision-success>

<https://asccc.org/resolutions/local-academic-senate-role-developing-and-implementing-guided-pathways-frameworks>

<https://asccc.org/resolutions/academic-senate-role-appointing-faculty-guided-pathways-framework-design-and>

<https://asccc.org/resolutions/support-local-academic-senates-committing-guided-pathways-framework>

<https://asccc.org/resolutions/inclusion-library-faculty-college-cross-functional-teams-guided-pathways-and-other>

I encourage everyone to look over the resolutions to see what’s of interest to your area and constituents. There were resolutions related to FLOW (fully online college), to Multiple Measures and placement issues, to alignment with transfer destinations, to marking courses with zero and low cost course materials and many others.

Eric Thompson