



June 30, 2009

Paul Sechrist, President
Felix Aquino, Team Leader
Marion Paden, Team Leader
Oklahoma City Community College
7777 S. May Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73159

Dear President and Team Leaders:

Thank you for the report on your Achieving the Dream activities and expenditures. MDC has completed a review of the report, approved it, and recommended to the Achieving the Dream national partnership that Oklahoma City Community College continue into their next year of implementation.

The report helped us better understand the challenges your college faces and the progress you are making toward increasing student success.

We are encouraged by several things including:

Committed Leadership

- The president's consistent efforts to entrench a student success agenda at OCCC.
- Participation of representatives from the Board of Regents and State Chancellor's office on the OCCC Achieving the Dream Leadership Team.

Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services

- Evidence of increased completion rates in two of three development math courses.
- Evidence of an increase in persistence from fall to spring semesters.
- Your use of qualitative research methods to inform the development of strategies for advisement, online course success, and gateway course success.
- Your investment in additional staff and software for the IR office.
- Your routine presentation of data, including course completion, persistence, and retention, to the Board of Regents.

Broad Engagement

- Inclusion of faculty and students in focus groups.
- The addition of a rural school district to the OKC-GO (free tuition) program.

- Inclusion of a large number of faculty and staff on the Achieving the Dream Leadership Team.

Systemic Institutional Improvement

- A significant increase in the amount of financial aid awarded (40%).
- Your allocation of internal resources to support student success interventions.

Based on your report and our observations of your work over the past year, we urge you to pay special attention to the following issues in the coming year. Your data facilitator and coach can help you address these challenges.

Committed Leadership

- Increase efforts to break down “silos” between academic divisions and student support as you develop and implement plans focused on student success.
- Enhance the effectiveness of your Achieving the Dream work by setting ambitious goals to improve student success.

Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services

- Develop and implement a comprehensive Achieving the Dream evaluation plan, one that will provide the evidence you need to inform decisions about which interventions to bring to scale.
- As a member of the Achieving the Dream learning community, complete entries to the Interventions to Improve Student Success Online Tool are important. Including both baseline and evaluative data enhance the usefulness of this tool for all users. We encourage you to post evaluative data for all of your interventions.
- Continue to regularly disaggregate student data to identify achievement gaps.

Broad Engagement

- Develop a communications plan to further communicate about student success with internal and external stakeholders.
- Continue to encourage dialogue among different areas and stakeholders at the institution and in the greater community.
- Include student support services and faculty in all efforts to ensure that complementary and centralized solutions emerge.

Systemic Institutional Improvement

- Move forward with plans to implement interventions in advising, online course completion and gateway course completion.
- Bring the developmental math pilot, which the data show is increasing student success, to a larger scale and plan for bringing it full-scale.
- Expand planning and engagement opportunities between student services and academic leaders.

Since Oklahoma City Community College is moving into its 2nd year of implementation, you should expect up to 9 days assistance from your coach and 9 days assistance from your data facilitator in the coming year. While you will receive fewer days of technical assistance from your data facilitator and coach, this does not reflect a reduction in their commitment, or ours, to support your Achieving the Dream work. Both will continue to participate in the annual Strategy Institute, providing another opportunity to lend support and advice.

In order to maintain uniformity in your budget format and line items, please use the 2009 financial report in all Achieving the Dream budgetary matters. If the college needs to revise any line item by more than 10 percent, and that line item is greater than \$5,000, the college must seek advance approval from MDC. At the end of this fiscal year, any remaining funds may be carried over into the next year's budget while staying in the line item. Any deviation needs advance approval from MDC. Please contact ATD@mdcinc.org for more information.

Thank you for your leadership in Achieving the Dream. We especially appreciate the inclusiveness of Oklahoma City Community College's Leadership Team and the ways in which you have engaged students and faculty through surveys and focus groups.

We look forward to another year of collaboration with you and to seeing you at the 2010 Strategy Institute.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Lincoln

Cc: Wayne Giles, Coach
Jacki Stirn, Data Facilitator
Terri Smith, MDC Inc.
Debra Stuart, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education