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Genuine Faculty Input on Student Success  
Part Two of a Series  
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Everyone is interested in seeking ways to enhance student success. The challenge at many California Community Colleges is that faculty input is often secondary, superseded by districts' concerns with legislative mandates in the arena of student services. This was certainly the case at Rio Hondo College where I work, when in 2013, faculty were not even invited to participate in discussions about success until after it was decided that the demands of the Student Success Initiative were best achieved by promoting an administrator. While the SSI generally addressed efficient student advancement, a large missing piece of the puzzle was successful classroom achievement.

Since student success is genuinely reached in classrooms, counseling offices, libraries, and elsewhere on campus, the Academic Senate leadership facilitated a day-long workshop to develop proposals to help students achieve their educational goals. The purpose was to provide suggestions to the administration that could be used to enhance student success beyond the counseling mandates of the SSI.

The Senate leadership was pleased to have a wide ranging attendance during the event that was held in January 2014, during our intersession when very few classes were conducted. There were three dozen attendees representing faculty from all divisions, including a good number of part-timers as well.

The workshop was divided into several sessions, each of which was started with information about a particular area of the college and followed by small group work to elicit suggestions for improving student success.

The first session provided background information on the SSI, described the changes to the funding mechanisms on student contact and preparation, and outlined goals for the workshop. This was followed by a great presentation by one of our counselors who explained what they face when seeing students. Although I had already been teaching for well over a decade, I found this information quite informative because I never knew how challenging it was for counselors to place students into the right classes.

There were several other productive sessions, where the emphasis was placed on faculty input. Engagement levels were so high that the facilitators had to eventually cut off the discussions so that participants could report out in a timely manner. A key focus was determining why students succeed and understanding where pitfalls occur, both in the classroom level and in the attainment of their overall educational goals. A related session narrowed in on helping students in the classroom. The final portion was devoted to sessions on multiple subjects like CTE, online learning, part-time faculty, and basic skills.

The six-hour session was one of the most rewarding of my academic career, largely influenced by faculty convening together to address a central topic to their profession, helping students succeed. What resulted was a score of suggestions, each intending to increase success in the classroom and beyond.

The next step would be reporting our suggestions to the entire campus community, something that will be addressed in the next entry...

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*Contact Communications Director [Austin Webster](#) to contribute a future blog.*