

*Note: This feedback was provided by College Spark after South Seattle College submitted the 5 year Work Plan Update May 15, 2018.*

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## **South Seattle College**

### **Steps required prior to the next disbursement, scheduled for October 2019:**

- As requested in the work plan instructions, please provide College Spark with copies of **program maps**. These can be shared on-line, and we understand that these may not yet be well-formatted or 'student-facing' and that additional vetting of these maps may take place over the coming months.
- Provide College Spark with the list of South Seattle's Areas of Study and the Programs of Study that fall within each of these.
- Submit the **year-end financial report** to College Spark – this should reflect spending to date, a budget for the coming year, the proposed allocation for any carry-over funds from the previous year, and the integration of the 2018 supplemental technology funding allocation.

### **Work Plan Feedback**

While the work plan review committee is concerned about the slow rate of progress SSC is making regarding planning for and implementing Guided Pathways, they recommended authorizing the 2018 College Spark Guided Pathways grant disbursement in light of the college's progress in mapping programs during the past year, the commitment to guided pathways at the district level, and recent changes in leadership. **College Spark would like to schedule a meeting with SSC to discuss concerns, grant requirements, and ways in which the work plan might be strengthened for next year.**

### **Faculty and Staff Engagement**

Strengths noted by members of the review committee in this Essential Practice Area included the new Guided Pathways structure including guiding team, pillar committees, task forces, and implementation support work groups; academic transfer faculty engagement in program mapping; and the implementation of Pathways Fridays. A weakness in this area noted by some members was that the plan for engaging faculty and staff lacked specificity and urgency. In the 2019 work plan update, please expand upon strategies the college is using to engage faculty and staff. In addition, please provide additional details regarding the structure of the various groups described in the work plan, such as how frequently they meet, the outcomes/deliverables each group is responsible for, and some details about the membership of different groups.

### **Meta Majors and Programs of Study**

Review committee members noted two strengths in this area, including the district-wide alignment of Areas of Study and their associated Programs of Study, and the adoption of common learning outcomes for areas of study. In the 2019 work plan update, please confirm that Areas of Study have been finalized, describe how South Seattle's programs are aligned within these Areas, and how these are being communicated to students in a way that aids them in decision making.

### **Exploratory Sequence**

While the work plan describes some important work related to developing a specific exploratory sequence for each Area of Study such as focused discussions regarding benchmarking first year learning outcomes and the development of a work group related to this Essential Practice, the year two minimum grant requirement (that default exploratory course sequences for each area of study be completed) has not been met. To be eligible for the 2019 grant disbursement, it will be important that exploratory sequences for each area of study be completed, with a clear plan for implementing these sequences during the 2019-2020 school year.

### **Designing Programs/Degree Maps**

The year-two minimum grant requirement for this Essential Practice Area is that Degree Maps are completed for all programs of study and that these are provided to College Spark to share with the work plan review committee. The information provided in the work plan indicates that SSCC had nearly completed mapping programs, but copies were not provided with the work plan update; this step needs to be completed prior to the 2018 grant disbursement.

Review committee members noted that SSC used a thorough and thoughtful process in their mapping, and noted this Essential Practice area as a major strength of the college. Additionally while the action plan in this area includes tasks associated with updating maps when program changes occur, the work plan review committee encourages SSC to continue to focus on cross-college engagement with regard to program mapping, particularly if there was not broad engagement in the program mapping process that took place to date.

### **Communication**

The work plan indicates that updating of the website and other materials that communicate about Programs of Study organized by Meta Majors or Areas will be completed this fall, which will meet the minimum grant requirement in this area. However, the steps the college will take to complete this work are vague. It will be important to provide a detailed update on progress in this area in the 2019 work plan update. Also, in general, it would be helpful if the items listed in the action plans were more specific and detailed, particularly for Essential Practice areas where SSC is behind on a minimum grant requirement.

Strengths in this Essential Practice Area included the student feedback taskforce, website redesign prioritization and a contused [continued?] focus on internal case making.

### **Technology**

The minimum year-one and year-two grant requirement in this Essential Practice Area (defined technology needs and a detailed plan to address these) has not been completed, but it appears that delays in this area are largely the result of SSC being a member of a college district that is addressing these issues together, and the work plan indicates that the college will make a technology purchase and address these items during the 2018-2019 year. The steps included in the action plan for this Essential Practice are overly broad and don't lay out a clear plan for *how* the college will develop a technology implementation plan, train staff to use new technology solutions, or develop processes, procedures, and polices that will ensure information critical for Guided Pathways implementation is collected and utilized. Additionally, it is not clear that a technology task force or leadership team for this task has yet been identified. To be eligible for the 2019 grant disbursement, it will be important that the college have

a detailed tech plan in place that describes how the college will begin to operationalize a system of collecting data essential for Guided Pathways implementation and reporting during the 2019-2020 year.

### **Intake & Advising**

While the review committee identified some strengths in this plan, such as mandatory orientation for all degree seeking students, there was universal concern among review committee members about an overall lack of progress on these two Essential Practice Areas. It appears that the college is a full year behind the minimum grant requirements in these areas, and there was a concern among a majority of the review committee members that the activities described in the action plan did not outline a viable plan to develop an intake and advising plan that would reflect the description of Intake and Advising included in these Essential Practices. Specifically, as described in the work plan, intake and advising needs to be mandatory and include processes that ensure all students select an Area of study upon enrollment and a program of study within two quarters. To be eligible for the 2019 grant disbursement, it will be critical that the intake and advising developed by SSC during the coming year specifically address each of these items. As the college engages in this work, the review committee offers the following feedback:

- The college describes plans to communicate to students about areas of study and condense enrollment pathways from 37- to 6-10. While these are important steps, neither of these activities will in themselves provide students with support in making an informed choice about areas of study. It will be important that the college develop and describe a viable plan for how they will support this initial student choice.
- While the action plans in the Advising Essential Practice Area reflect an understanding that the advising redesign plan needs to include a system for facilitating entry into program of study within two quarters, it is unclear how the college will go about developing this critical aspect of Guided Pathways. The college should consider what activities and interim deliverables might be needed along the way to ensure they develop a strong advising plan by spring 2019.
- Given how much has been learned through Achieving the Dream and other initiatives regarding the importance of making student supports mandatory (recognizing that so often 'students don't do optional', especially the students who need support the most) it will be absolutely critical that intake and advising activities essential to helping students make informed choices about Areas and Programs of Study are mandatory with specific mechanisms to ensure students receive the support they need. We appreciate that in many ways SSC faces bigger challenges than other colleges in this area, with regard to faculty advising and high student/advisor ratios, and are eager to learn from any strategies the college might employ to provide this kind of support to students in an efficient and feasible way. Some Cohort One colleges with limited advising capacity are using mandatory college success courses as a major strategy in helping students made decisions about Programs of Study; this seems like a viable, large scale way of helping students make an informed decision about this matter.

### **Degree Math & College-Level English**

Strengths noted by review committee members in this area included the use of multiple placement measures, work to reduce the pre-college sequence, the math department reviewing college-level math completion data, the English department's integration of DSP model, and plans to expand Statway (and the potential of this to be successful given UW's recent decision on the course). Concerns in this area

were more focused on math than English, and included a perception that many of the strategies discussed seemed to be in a development or pilot stage rather than being ready to scale, and worries that the steps outlined in the action plan seem highly unlikely to result in at least 50% of students passing college-level math within a year, a major goal of the initiative.

Though not reflected in the work plan, College Spark staff recently met with SSC regarding math strategies that could potentially be supported by a College Spark Washington Community Grant and were extremely excited about the project discussed at this meeting and the ambitious nature of the strategies the college was considering. This work would be very aligned with this Guided Pathways Essential Practice area.

### **Gatekeeper Courses**

There were no minimum grant requirements scheduled for this Essential Practice Area this year. Strengths noted by the review committee included the productive persistence model being integrated into some discipline areas and plans to identify gatekeeper course within each pathways. The action plan acknowledged the need to identify gatekeeper courses, but was lacking in specific steps that would be taken to complete this task, and did not include steps to develop specific plans to improve success in the gatekeeper courses that are identified.

### **Math Pathways**

Some strengths in this area were noted by the review committee, such as plans to integrate math faculty into broader guided pathways work and preliminary steps toward contextualization, however there was considerable concern and confusion regarding this Essential Practice Area among the review committee members. It was unclear whether or not SSC currently has multiple math pathways at scale (recognizing that currently only a relatively small percentage of students take Statway), whether or not the college plans to develop these, or if the work to align math with Areas and Programs of study had been completed or remains to be done. The action plan did not describe a clear plan or specific steps the college would take to make progress on aligning math to pathways and contextualization. To be eligible for the 2019 grant disbursement, it will be important that these concerns are addressed in the 2019 work plan update.

### **Scheduling**

Strengths in this area included plans to integrate student feedback through focus groups, a deep planning and reflection process, and prioritization of offering gen ed courses when prof tech students can take them. In the 2019 work plan update, it will be important to describe the scale of block scheduling at SSC and whether this schedule has been designed in such a way that full-time students could complete all programs within two years.

### **Systems for Program Monitoring and Intervening**

In the 2019 work plan update it will be important to describe specifically how SSC will collect and utilize the four data points referenced in this essential practice area.

### **Redirecting Students Who Are Not Making Progress**

In the 2019 work plan update it will be important to describe a systemic approach to identify and support students at risk of falling off their program plans as well as large scale strategies for assisting students who are unlikely to be accepted into limited access programs such as nursing to identify a more viable path to credentials and career.

### **Ensuring Learning**

Strengths noted in this area included an established cycle of review for learning outcomes and course outcomes linked to college-wide outcomes.