

Equitable access to career pathways – successes and challenges

Jan 24, 2023 | Adult Education/Noncredit Workgroup meeting

Within the context of ensuring equitable access to Career Pathways, what are your successes?

- Professional development: going deep and involving all college employees
 - Anti-bias, trauma response training (ETCN); equity and diversity training for all staff: faculty, classified, administration (Southwestern); DEI (SDCCE); behind-the-scenes process of examining structures for what they communicate to students and syllabi to ensure inclusiveness (Grossmont); MiraCosta Innovative Source for Training (MIST) and Diversity, Equity, and Cultural Competence Committee (DEqCC), required for all employees. DEqCC has successful one-day workshops during FLEX week (MiraCosta)
- Going out into the community:
 - Building community among immigrant groups with potential friction (ETCN); community partnerships (Southwestern); expanding offsite classes on weekends, including services like Food Pantry and Career Services (MiraCosta)
- Sharing information at advisory meetings, looking for curriculum overlap and complementarity (Southwestern)
- Increasing SB 554 enrollment from 3 to 15 students from Year 1 to Year 2 of implementation (Southwestern)
- Focus on student journey (how students get into and exit pathways, enter the workforce, stay there, and come back for additional training) (SDCCE)
- Making sure Workforce Prep classes pair soft skills (job interview skills, self-exploration, communications, finances) with Intro to CTE courses. Employers requested it, so it is required in order to get the certificate (SDCCE)
- Expanding IET to non-medical programs; building stronger bridge to CTE programs (Grossmont)
- Maintaining the number of remote/Zoom courses while returning to pre-pandemic levels of in-person classes (MiraCosta)
- Hiring more instructional aides for students of all abilities (MiraCosta)

What are your challenges?

- Data
 - Lost Perkins funding due to inability to collect data during pandemic (Sweetwater); not being accurately represented in the college MIS system (Southwestern); being new to collecting data and not having what they need to know where students need more support (SDCCE); data collection is a general

challenge (Grossmont); difficult to collect data that shows their needs (MiraCosta)

- CASAS Rules and Regulations
 - Rules/regulations around tests qualifying students for IET or IELCE are a barrier to creating an integrated pathways system without first labeling students (Grossmont); Adults don't want to take those tests (MiraCosta)
- Funding
 - School allocations are not based on enrollment; consequently, schools have to augment their income through fees or make a trade-off: give up afternoon, weekend, and offsite classes in exchange for 100% free classes including free books and materials (Sweetwater); Schools can't offer all the supports they want and serve more students (Grossmont); Funding is not going to support the work in the near future—costs are rising but there has not been a commensurate increase in funding (MiraCosta)
- Southwestern has had to cut the number of remote/Zoom courses to return to pre-pandemic levels of in-person classes. This has created hardships for students who benefited from the remote learning modality.
- SDCCE has found it challenging to improve the success rate in earning credit by exam.
- SD City College has had difficulty messaging to high school graduates about the opportunities in NC programs.
- Grossmont continues to fine tune their message of how pathways work. It doesn't always make sense from the student viewpoint.

How do you ensure equitable access to career pathways for all students?

- Drop CASAS assessments as gatekeepers to pathway participation (Sweetwater, Southwestern, Grossmont)
- VABE classes for returning students so they don't have to start over (Sweetwater)
- No fees for classes (Sweetwater)
- Moving money around, leveraging all possible funding sources to be sure that the equipment in their classes replicate industry settings (Sweetwater)
- Expanding NC classes that include Career Development and College Prep (CDCP) certificates and align with for-credit pathway programs (Southwestern)
- Adding VESL (IELCE) and support classes for allied health classes (Southwestern)
- SB 554 (Grossmont, Southwestern)
- Piloting the same affordable housing manager program that MiraCosta offers, bringing in more NC classes (Southwestern)
- Microcredentials, stackable programs (SDCCE)
- Free software, book loan, free textbooks, free equipment packets (SDCCE)

What challenges to equity have you faced and what were your solutions?

Common examples include the following:

- Grossmont moved away from PD on cultural competence to examining their structures and what those communicate to students. They now try to make sure students know where to go to get resources. They are examining onboarding procedures—are students able to make informed decisions based on their goals? Grossmont is examining their conversations with students and checking their assumptions.

- Grossmont started providing language support in IET classes, but it was an add-on and students didn't take advantage of it. So they began to embed it in the programs. They now have a designated position/program specialist who does this work of helping students connect the dots.
- With predictions of enrollment decline and possible economic recession, Southwestern has expanded its curriculum inventory to include NC, career development, short term, and Career Development and College Prep (CDCP) certificates. Ideally these will align with credit pathway programs; they want to make sure all offerings are viable and job focused.

Are there student supports needed that you don't have access to?

No one answered this question explicitly; Grossmont requested vendors or PowerPoints for classified staff training.