

The Greater Expectations Gazette

Founded 2006

Today is Sunday, June 25, 2006. Today's temperature: Hi: 71 Lo: 49°



Taking Your Plan Back to Campus

Snowbird, UT – With Saturday being the last day to complete campus action plans, conversations turned to concrete tips for introducing, communicating, and implementing innovative educational change. Faculty member Judith Ramaley offered a series of steps for teams to follow as they undertake "re-entry" to campus:

1. Build the case
2. Choose a target
3. Set goals
4. Initiate action
5. Make connections
6. Rebalance the system to accommodate new learning
7. Consolidate learning
8. Celebrate progress
9. Breathe deep and...prepare to begin the process all over again

Gail Evans, a 2005 Institute participant from San José State University, discussed how her team took their project back to campus. In late August 2005, the SJSU team presented their plan to the Provost and noted how enthusiastic they were about the Institute. The Provost asked the team to submit a proposal to develop a campus-based institute that would allow more constituents to be engaged in such a process. Senior leaders provided resources to undertake a 3-day institute in early 2006. That fall, the team created opportunities to "prime" others on campus for the Institute, distributed advanced readings, and included a student panel and team time in the make-up. Sixty participants worked in groups reflecting existing strategic planning panels, and the 60-person group developed a final report that included "next steps." Evidence of success included awareness of and interest in the institute and its concepts after it occurred, funding to make it an annual event, a one-day Dean's retreat this summer, and work on the next phase of campus-based action. After recounting SJSU's first year post-Institute, Evans recommended that teams: (a) tailor what they do to their own needs, (b) extend beyond their core group, (c) get buy-in across the campus, and (d) have fun in the process.

Vera Zdravkovich, a faculty member whose former institution, Prince George's Community College, sent a team to the Institute several years ago, shared another approach to campus implementation. The PGCC approach was to involve both internal and external constituents in a dialogue about Greater Expectations as a first step in permeating the culture with the messages about the need for this kind of practical education for the new century. To do so, PGCC hosted a pair of education summits that had faculty, administrators, and student affairs staff, as well as business and community leaders, politicians, K-12 superintendents, and local college presidents discussing liberal education in the context of a highly diverse, urban/suburban county. Zdravkovich noted how much these meetings, plus other activities on campus, helped bring the tenets of *Greater Expectations* into campus culture, shape PGCC's evaluation processes, and influence practices such as the hiring and professional development of new faculty.



From the Director...

We've reached our last day! Thank you for your dedication to creating the powerful educational change witnessed this week. I also thank our Institute faculty, who provided so much wisdom to our shared enterprise, and AAC&U staff, who worked hard to provide you a true learning opportunity. Best wishes as you return to campus and engage others in this learning!

Alma R. Clayton-Pedersen
Director, Greater Expectations Institute

The Student View Reflections on Snowbird

"Overall, this experience has been great, but what I would add to it next time to make it more powerful is to have more students [and] student-oriented workshops." – Guuleed Shiridon, UMass Boston

"We have had a phenomenal experience here at Greater Expectations. This institute has given us great insight and ideas about what we as students can do to assist in the facilitation of change. It has helped us to realize our role as representatives of the student body and come to know that our voice really can make a difference.

We have been exposed to the ideas that excellence is not exclusive, realizing the importance of creating a living curriculum, and the fact that diversity equals critical thinking. We have learned that engagement is the pathway to inclusive excellence and that student success becomes an institutional issue when leaders make it so.

What we are taking away with us is the knowledge that diversity is a constant work in progress and often includes battling the culture. This institute has given us the means to make our vision come alive." - Megan Correia and Rachel Gaskill, Wells College

Student panel, 2006 Greater Expectations Institute



Question of the Day

What is one tip you've learned so far regarding taking your work back to campus?

"Publish top student essays based on a 'Freshman Novel' for entering students (the Wofford model)." – Hal Fulmer, Troy University

"Build your case for change and be prepared to trot it out." – Maribeth Price, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

"Tie boutique programs to [the] broader general education program." – Hal Crimmel, Weber State University

"Expand our thinking about where to find the resources for reform." – Anne Henderson, Trinity University

"Speak to faculty in their language and about their concerns; speak to administrators in their language and about their concerns." – Yvonne Smith, University of La Verne

"The metaphor of various areas of the college as parts of a house (e.g., the academic side of the house) does not serve us well." – Cathy McDonald, Columbia State Community College, quoting someone from Troy State University

"We need to take advantage of the mountain and energy that we have gained here. So I plan to be active this summer to help lay the foundation of our work this fall." – Erie Wiener, Ramapo College of New Jersey

"Give people a sense of a long timeframe (3-5 years) so they don't expect immediate 'magic'." – Alice Savage, Manchester Community College

"It's essential to have faculty involved." – Lynne Goodstein, University of Connecticut

"Use the website as a communication vehicle to disseminate our project's action plan." – Mildred Fuller, Norfolk State University

"We need to integrate holistic learning outcomes across silos but we need to ensure that we include 'resisters' in (re)defining what those learning outcomes are." – Jacki Reich, Chestnut Hill College

"Create a sense of 'special-ness' make faculty/student pride work for a shared vision instead of for the status quo." – Shelly Ganter, Columbia College Chicago

"Validate your institution's past successes and clearly show how your new initiatives will enrich these existing practices." – Sarah Arroyo, California State University, Long Beach

Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Excellence for All Students

Friday afternoon, Sue Borrego and Vera Zdravkovich took the stage to talk about the importance of collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs in building excellence for all students. Zdravkovich began by talking about three examples of strong collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs at Prince George's Community College. One particularly noteworthy example involved a jointly written proposal to the Department of Education that centered on a first-year experience program. Zdravkovich noted how even the proposal writing process—regardless of whether or not they were awarded funding—fostered a set of conversations and actions that may have otherwise not taken place. The shared effort "built institutional capacity and intellectual capacity," she said, "and we knew that even if we were not granted external funds that we would pick up at least some pieces of the project."

Building off of her interest group session on this topic, Sue Borrego talked about the importance of having true *collaboration* in place, rather than simply coordination. "Sometimes we think of collaboration as 'You pull out your calendar and I'll pull out my calendar, and then we'll share the dates of our different activities'," she said. She also talked about Helen Keller, who learned through "everything in her environment," and asked the audience where the opportunities to learn took place on their campuses. Borrego stressed the importance of academic affairs and student affairs sharing a larger, learning-centered focus, and she referred to the course content question from the student panel.

"I don't think students were saying that content doesn't matter," she said. "I think they were saying that *making meaning* matters." She then asked the group, "what am I missing if I don't know what's meaningful for others?"

Borrego argued that "transformative learning" occurs not in some particular space, such as the classroom, or some particular time, such as during class, but rather "in the context of students' lives"—lives that comprise experiences inside and outside the classroom and the curriculum. She provided several suggestions of ways to more systemically link student affairs and academic affairs, and to build collaborative relationships between staff and faculty.

Photo of the Day

Dessert mixer, Atrium



The Greater Expectations Gazette, Vol. 1, No. 5

Contributors

Amy Addams Alma Clayton-Pedersen
Patty Alvarez Karen Kalla
Misha Charles Nancy O'Neill

For example, campus leaders should consider having student affairs staff and faculty join together in professional development on learning outcomes. Borrego also stressed the importance of having the mission and strategic plan focus on learning rather than "academic learning."

"If we miss [the contribution of student affairs to learning] in our language then we will miss it in our resources and in our facilities," she cautioned. Borrego noted that both student affairs staff and faculty need greater understanding of how learning happens, as well as a better understanding of the elements behind true collaboration.

"Shared outcomes, shared resources, and shared planning" are all critical elements to successful partnerships, she said. "It may be that we do less—more deeply."

Collaboration in Action

Sue Borrego told the story of an "SGA meltdown" that prompted a much deeper partnership between academic affairs and student affairs. Realizing that the issue at the center of the breakdown had to do with shared governance, Borrego called the chair of the faculty senate and together they fostered a dialogue over time with students about governance and the roles and responsibilities that come with leadership. Powerful learning all around!