A New Theory of Change

RP Board President
Gregory Stoup
Let’s do a quick tour around the room

Q: What is the biggest challenge facing community colleges today?
A New Theory of Change
Why change?
K-12 has long been the target for call to changes
But what about Higher Education?
American Higher Education has been a source of pride

• In 1993 the US was ranked #1 in the world in higher education and had the highest percent of adults with a college degree

• By 2009, the United States was ranked 18th out of 36 industrialized nations; ranked 16th in the percentage of adults with a degree

• Since 2009 recession concerns over the cost and economic return of a college degree have become heated topics
**Perspective is changing**

**In the past**
- High satisfaction with Higher Education
- College was affordable
- Few metrics to reveal any real problems
- Performance was on the student
- “Trust us” was accepted regarding questions about academic quality

**Today**
- Satisfaction is waning; crisis talk on the rise
- Cost fatigue (tuition and fees and books and transportation and food and housing going up)
- Data is suggesting there is room for improvement
- Colleges now asked to own outcomes
- Demanding proof of good quality
Headlines began touching on the issue 10 years ago.
And public satisfaction has begun to wane

- Over half Americans now believe that college is a gamble that might not pay off
- Just 20% of millennials think higher education is working well for them
And students nationwide are feeling ...
California Community College completion rates over the last ten years

California State Average

48.8% 47.1%


Definition: Completion (SPAR) – The percentage of degree and/or transfer seeking first-time students tracked for six years to determine who succeeded in completing a degree, certificate or transfer related outcome.
...and equity

California Community College completion rates over the last ten years

CA Average for Asian-American & White Students

CA Average for African-American & Hispanic Students

* Data were pooled into two broad categories (Asian & White and African-American and Hispanic) to create context for subsequent research findings in which the methodology forced this same grouping pattern due to sample size limitation; the first five years of data in each series were derived from Scorecards released in previous years.
What is happening?

• Is this a story about a decline in the quality of college education?

• Or is society demanding something different from colleges?
Expectations have changed about college

(Pre 1945)

Luxury Good

Rapid expansion in enrollment and relevance to society

(Today)

Necessity Good

People tend to view a luxury good very differently than they do a necessity good.
Economic security is dependent upon higher learning

Consider your job at risk if it:
1. has clearly identifiable goals
2. follows a clear set of steps to complete a task

A college education is becoming a requirement

Data source: Career and Technical Education Report, Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown Public Policy Institute, Georgetown university (September 2013; October 2017)
The initial response...

- What Works at Community Colleges (2009)
- Achieving the Dream (2010)
- Completion by Design (2011)
- Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence (2011)

* This report was one of the first calls to action for a redesign of college processes.
Local innovation is the path to change

The recurring themes from the first wave response

- Evidence-based decision-making
- Sharing Best Practices
- Professional Development
- Practitioner-led innovation
- Customized research
But innovation didn’t lead to scale improvements

Recent efforts to improve student outcomes have typically led to one of two scenarios:

• Innovations that have a small impact on large numbers of students
• Innovations that have a large impact on small numbers of students
Fragmented systems cannot be brought to scale

“....the community college mission has evolved considerably ... and when colleges encounter a mismatch between operations and their mission, systems begin to fragment as they try to accommodate a more diverse set of needs and great number of purposes”

Are we all thinking about innovation in the same way?

• Is it new forms of information delivery. Educational technology that is scalable and efficient. Think Netflix. Think Spotify.

• Or is it about the creation of a new educational landscape grounded in access, equity and student achievement. An immersive environment designed for learning and where learning is reinforced in every encounter with students.
Q: What has been the biggest hurdle in bringing local innovations to scale at your institution?
The message today

Achieving improvements at scale will require redesign
Design is a signal of intent and we have largely been designed to pursue an access mission.

**Access-focused mission**

- Enrollment is the core indicator
- Promotes ease of entry, exit, re-entry
- Emphasizes free choice of courses
- Forward-facing design

**Completion-focused mission**

- Core indicator is credential/transfer
- College offers programs with clearly articulated time lines and milestones
- Provides structured choice and tailored supports
- Backward engineered design
We are making a pivot

Yesterday’s focus

- Practitioner-led innovation
- Assess programs using local data/criteria
- Technical Assistance programs
- Share best practices / professional development
- Choose models that best fits local culture

Today’s focus

- Implement system strategies
- Evaluate progress using system metrics
- Structured Pathways
- System wide Dev Ed reform (AB 705)
- Performance based Funding (SCFF)
Not an either/or but definitely a shift in focus

Yesterday’s focus

Innovation

Today’s focus

Implementation

5 Years Ago

Today

5 Years Ahead
Dear Colleagues:

In July, the Governor and the Legislature established a new funding formula for the California Community Colleges [AB 1809, Chapter 33, Statutes of 2018]. In that Statute, colleges/districts are required to establish the following:

1. Local goals that are **aligned with the system-wide goals in the Vision for Success**
2. Local goals that are numerically **measurable**
3. Local goals that specify the **timeline for improvement**
Vision Goal #1a: Increase total degrees by 20% (AS/AA/ADT Degrees)

Actual completions

Required to achieve state goal

Los Medanos

Degree Goal is to be at or above 1,254 by 2021/22

Data source for graph: COMIS data submitted by 4CD to the CCCCO (4CD definition).
A challenge when using data this way

The Proxy Problem
Need to make sure we measure what we want change

Quality domain to be improved

is represented by

Proxy Measures

which leads to

Performance assessment

Incentivized feedback loop

intended feedback loop
A second challenge

Multiple data sources pushed to the end-user
Managing confusion around what data to use when

State plans with data having goal-setting requirements

• Vision for Success
• Student Equity (SEAP)
• Guided Pathways
• Strong Workforce
• Adult Education

California Student Success Metrics Dashboard

Recurring requests or data for recurring reports

• ACCJC Annual Report
• Distance Ed data

Designed Reports for specific uses or specific users

• Program Review
• Student Waitlist Report

New Research Requests or updates of existing reports

• Unit Load Study
• Time to Degree
• Segmentation Study
• Environmental Scan
• Achievement Gap Report
• Cohort Studies

4CD Tableau data and visualizations

SQL Reports

Formal research request system

Word of caution from your Institutional Effectiveness Office:

Your college transfer rate and completion rate may be different across all these databases.

Managing confusion around what data to use when
Q: Are you noticing new challenges emerging recently?

Q: Are there new skills or capabilities that appear to be in greater demand?
Wrap up

Any final thoughts?
Thank you
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Presenter: Gregory Stoup, President of the Board, The RP Group

The last several years has witnessed an acceleration of several important trends in the community college landscape including further movement toward performance-based funding models, curricular redesign in pre-collegiate course sequences; the scraping of decades old assessment practices and a systematic redesign of the student experience that emphasizes program pathways. This highly interactive session will explore how research can best drive change in an environment that is placing ever more emphasizes on planning and the implementation of adopted designs. More fundamentally, this session will articulate a new theory of institutional change implied by recent policies and how the research function will need to evolve to remain relevant.

Track 3 - Captains of Tomorrow: Leadership in Institutions
Track 4 - Charting the Future by Understanding the Past: Institutional Research as Change Agent