



Los Medanos College
Institutional Development for Equity & Access
Theory of Change & Assessment Planning Meeting #4

Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2009

Meeting Purpose: This was the final meeting to develop IDEA's Theory of Change. The group reviewed work to date and discussed IDEA's strategies and outcomes.

In Attendance

Rosa Armendariz, HSI Grant Activity Director
Dave Belman, Director, Office of Student Life
Karl Debro, AVID Coordinator and Instructor
Erlinda Jones, Faculty Child Study Department
Frances Moy, Counselor
Newin Orante, Interim Dean of Student Development
Tue Rust, Math Instructor
Humberto Sale, Research Office
Michael Yeong, Faculty English Department
Jamila Stewart, Student Representative and Classified Staff
Jennifer Curry Villeneuve and Sheila Nickolopoulos, BTW *informing change*

I. RECAP OF THE LMC IDEA THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change is the graphic representation of the change that IDEA wants to see. When BTW started this work with IDEA four months ago, the group was still working to understand how its role had changed from being a working group associated with the California Tomorrow Campus Change Network to being an official committee of the SGC. This Theory of Change process has helped clarify who IDEA is and the strategic direction it wants to take. We have also identified the problems that the committee wants to address.

Purpose Statement

In the purpose statement, and throughout the Theory of Change, the phrase "equity, inclusion and social justice" is used. This has replaced "equity, access and inclusion" because access is inherent in inclusion and social justice, which are core values of IDEA. IDEA's commitment to changing culture is also now included in the purpose statement. The group agreed that this clear statement now explains who IDEA is. While broad, the statement captures the character of IDEA's work.

Definitions

Terms frequently used by the group, such as equity, inclusion and institutional culture, will be discussed by Sheila and Rosa following this meeting. Those definitions will be circulated to the group by email and finalized in the fall. All committee members are encouraged to participate in the definitions discussion. The definitions will likely deepen over time as IDEA evolves in its work.

Problems

The group made slight changes to the wording of several problem statements in order to emphasize that although some students are well supported and certain practices are equitable, neither all students are well supported nor are all practices consistently equitable.

The problems statements are hypotheses that IDEA should test as it moves forward with its work to ensure that it is addressing these identified areas. There are numerous other problems that could be addressed, but IDEA is focusing on these four. The committee may want to refine the statements or clarify the scale of the problems moving forward.

Although bold statements, the group does not want to soften their position that serious issues around equity, inclusion and social justice exist on campus. For example, it is estimated that 80% of LMC students come in with compromised skills, and most of those are students of color and low income. Yet equity is barely mentioned in the LMC Master Plan. There is currently enough data to make the case that students are not to blame and that many complex factors contribute to lack of student success. IDEA wants to maintain an institutional, not individual, perspective on the issues. The group agreed that efforts to improve equity need to target the institution, not a group of people.

Strategies

Three strategies define the work of IDEA. The two external strategies describe gathering information and working with SGC, the internal strategy acknowledges that as a brand new committee, the group needs time to reflect and develop a shared language and better understanding of the complexities involved with this work. Having external and internal strategies should provide some balance to the group's work.

To operationalize the Theory of Change, IDEA will need to decide who will do the work and in what timeline. The first two tactics of the second strategy (analyzing and updating the Student Equity Plan and reviewing the Master Plan) are top priorities. IDEA still needs to identify how to accomplish and prioritize the rest of the work.

The group discussed the second external strategy (make recommendations to SGC to change policies, practices and planning efforts) and clarified that IDEA will be making recommendations to the SGC and will be taking on work assigned by SGC. IDEA will be responsible for completing specific pieces of work.

Internal Strategy

IDEA's work with BTW this semester has focused on the Theory of Change and has not allowed much time for the group to discuss issues of interest beyond their direct connection to high level planning. The internal strategy acknowledges that engaging in scholarship and debate is important to IDEA members and will inform their work moving forward. IDEA members want to continue their personal and professional development and make sure that IDEA is reflective and intentional, rather than task driven. The tactics currently listed under this strategy are suggestions and the group agreed to revisit them in the fall. Tactical activities can create spaces that will nurture the groups' intellectual curiosities, such as convening two to three annual retreats or creating a reading group for discussion.

IDEA's Process of Change

The group agreed that the graphic depiction of the Process of Change needs to show SGC as an independent entity. There was also agreement that information sources should be general, such as instructional programs, learning communities and academic support services, and not the names of specific programs (that detail will be included in the narrative companion).

The group agreed that the current version of the graphic is a draft and that the relationship of the pieces will become more apparent as IDEA operationalizes the work and defines how it will engage with each source.

Ultimate Impact

The ultimate impact is IDEA's vision of the future, understanding that it will take the work of others to accomplish it. IDEA will contribute to the ultimate impact, but is not directly responsible for all of it. Although the statement specifically references academic success, the group agreed that they are interested in social justice. They view education as more than individual economic potential—equity at LMC also means encouraging civic engagement and democratic involvement.

II. MILESTONES AND OUTCOMES

Outcomes indicate movement (e.g., increases) and correlate with strategies. Milestones are check-list items that correspond with tactics. Since IDEA will measure its success against the long-term outcomes, the group should consider: For what will IDEA hold itself accountable?

The group had identified a number of milestones and outcomes, so Jennifer encouraged everyone to think about what they are willing to cross off the list. Too many tactics can bog down work, so considering tactics in the context of strategies will help IDEA be intentional about what changes it wants to see, and therefore be able to have the impact they wish.

The group decided to bisect the outcomes into short-term (by 2012) and long-term (by 2015) outcomes. Even though there are three time periods, the final goals remain consistent.

The group discussed the outcome of developing a “culture of service.” This term was understood in multiple ways—for some it meant public service or community engagement, which ties into the ultimate impact of supporting more than academic success. For others it meant creating a culture of customer service within the institution that responds to what students say they need. The group agreed that if they keep this as an outcome, they would need to adjust the problem statements to better reflect the issues to be addressed. There was also concern that if this remains an outcome, it would be challenging to measure. The group decided to revisit this outcome at a future meeting.

III. NEXT STEPS

Notes from this meeting and an updated Theory of Change graphic will be sent in the next week. Discussion between IDEA and BTW about developing an assessment plan will be scheduled for early June as a phone call or as a meeting at BTW’s office in Berkeley. Newin and Rosa will be at that meeting, but anyone else on the committee is welcome to attend.