

## **Blue Group: Lisa, Francisco, Howard, Raquel and Paul**

### **Introduction:**

As we have discovered over the past few days, the case of LCC presents a complex set of achievements and challenges. And as some colleagues have effectively pointed out, LCC can point to some key successes, including increased enrollments (p.15), decent completion and transfer rates (p.16 ).

However, our group felt that important changes are required to LCC's proposed strategies if the college is to succeed in achieving its stated goals. At the core of these suggested changes is a concept described by Buller in Change Leadership In Higher Education (Page 217-218):

### **[Statement]**

“Change leadership is more like gardening: you can't just order plants to grow; you have to put in the necessary effort preparing the soil. Like gardening, change leadership requires sustained investment of time. Some results occur very quickly (like this LCC's plan). But some of the things that grow very quickly (weeds, flawed strategic plans) aren't useful for the long haul. While you (the gardener, academic leader) may get a lot of credit, it'll be the others (the plants, the faculty and staff) who do most of the work. Both gardening and change leadership in higher education require people to adopt systems thinking. You can't just introduce a fertilizer or pesticide for one plant in a garden without considering how it might affect all others.”

So, with respect to Question 4, Part 1, our answer is **yes**, we would make changes to LCC's strategies, and this is what we offer:

First, we agree with the strategy of implementing Guided Pathways, as well as the vast majority of related sub-strategies, and we think this set of strategies will help LCC achieve their goals. However, **LCC should make *Increasing Internal Capacity* a tantamount goal connected to Guided Pathways.**

Currently it is a lower priority goal, according to Nolan and the Board (p. 11). Yet, if LCC is to deliver on its goal of putting LCC on the map and equipping the college with the “resources to provide the best, most affordable education” for students (p. 12), LCC cannot afford to put off or set aside its human resources challenges. For example:

- On Page 7, we see faculty at varying levels of understanding and consensus on Guided Pathways. For example, some faculty equate the initiative to yet another way they are being told “their best efforts aren’t good enough.” Others are concerned about how Guided Pathways will limit students’ options. And still others see it as a kind of work creep, adding in advising responsibilities. Ultimately, too few have been involved in developing the recommendations of the GP10.
- On Page 11, we hear about LCC’s challenges with staffing classes, relying heavily on adjunct instructors who “come and go,” often teach at multiple colleges, and are less connected with the campus. If LCC further increases its part-time faculty rates, LCC is unlikely to have the capacity to move initiatives forward since full-time, invested faculty have more time to participate in institutional projects. Reliance on part-time faculty limits student engagement and may decrease instructional quality.
- We also hear of frustrations among support services staff in meeting the needs of a more diverse student population. They are feeling “burnt out” (p.11).

To address this, we recommend adding the following strategies underneath Guided Pathways:

1. First, leverage the data dashboard as a tool to create a sense of urgency for GP. Draw on the Learning Culture principles of *A Genuine commitment to Learning* and *Adopting a Systems Approach* and engage all constituency groups in a series of summits/workshops to review and discuss institutional data - including their dashboard data - with a focus on disproportionately impacted students.
2. Secondly, we recommend the institution establishes a method for involving more diverse voices and interests in development of guided pathways. For example, include cross-constituency work groups complete with “innovation midwives” from among faculty, staff,

administrators, and students. This is essential to giving voice to diverse viewpoints and engaging all to provide a full set of analytical lenses for viewing Guided Pathways needs and implementation strategies. The group needs those with 20/20 lenses, telephoto lenses, sunglasses, and other lenses to bring multiple perspectives into focus.

These steps are important for engaging all constituencies, creating broad-based support, and helping the college community understand the “why” of Guided Pathways. This approach takes into account the **importance of organizations studying themselves and engaging key stakeholders**, and acknowledges the fact that **organizations rarely operate in a vacuum**. This approach will position the initiative as a needed, necessary change as opposed to a simply **desirable** change. (Buller p. 157)

These strategies also serve the function of addressing a critical flaw in LCC’s current approaches, which is that a small committee of 10 members are planning and strategizing for Guided Pathways (p. 6), and this committee is likely not representative of all stakeholders.

**Apart from the existing strategies, we would also add the add the following major strategies:**

**Work on Fiscal Stability:** The 20/20 lens needs to be utilized in order to see that the college is operating in the red and that it is in danger of a budget crisis (p. 13-14). In developing fiscal strategies, LCC needs to pay attention to demographic, economic, and legislative drivers. LCC should also commit to aligning its budget to support its adopted strategies, which means changing some financial planning behaviors (e.g. “rubber stamping” budgets year after year, p. 13) and re-prioritizing what is funded.

**For becoming a Regional Leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:**

**Align the development, expansion and possible reduction of programs** with external drivers such as the workforce needs of the larger employers in the region (e.g. auto assembly plant and computer parts manufacturer; p. 3).

**For Growth:**

**Develop non-credit workforce programs that are responsive** to employer and student needs.

**Potential 4th strategy:**

Align LCC's goals with goals of the Chancellor's Office *The Future of Achievement*, specifically addressing Goal 5, reducing equity gaps given that 45% of students are of color, half of all students are eligible for Pell Grants and 1 in 4 is a first-generation college student. TRIO programming is underutilized and there is a lack of focus on pursuing a Title III grant.

As for Part 2 of the question, we feel that the two Practices of Exemplary Leadership that are most important in this case are:

- **Inspiring a shared vision**, and
- **Enabling others to act.**

These practices will help LCC "prepare the soil" to grow the changes they aspire for.