

## **Mountain Empire Community College**

### **Student Success Certificate**

**Presentation at Faculty Inservice, January 2007**

**Dr. Richard Phillips, Vice President of Academic and Student Services**

This morning, I want to introduce the Student Success Certificate. Briefly, I will cover why I think it is important. Then, I will tell you how to get the certificate. I think that this certificate is important for 3 reasons:

1. it will help us focus on teaching and learning
2. it will help us focus on using data to make changes and decisions
3. it helps link professional development and program review

A college community is a learning community and the focus should be on teaching and learning. For most of us, that is the focus. We have some of the best faculty and programs in the state. While many of us do keep teaching and learning in the conversation, it is easy for the focus to shift to more immediate things such as how much paperwork we have to do, or how many committee meetings we have to attend, or many other issues that may be a part of what we have to do but do not transcend our goals of teaching and learning.

Achieving the Dream is attempting to change the conversation. Imagine if much of our conversation consisted of discussing how we could improve the transfer of subject matter information, how we could improve student learning, how we could improve the learning environment, and so on. I think that is the reason most of chose this profession. I think it is time that we changed the conversation and Achieving the Dream can help us do it.

- MECC is in its third year of involvement with Achieving the Dream and many of you have served on committees, planned initiatives, and helped us to make progress in improving student outcomes.
- For a student success initiative to be successful, we need to acknowledge that EVERYONE has a role in student success. While we know that there are developmental and gatekeeper courses that many of our students struggle with, there is room for improvement in outcomes for courses and programs across the campus.
- Achieving the Dream is not just a grant; it is a student success initiative that we will continue after Lumina support ends. To help in institutionalizing this work across the campus, during this year there has been an acknowledgement that Achieving the Dream work needs to be more closely tied to the annual planning process, the College's performance measures and the VCCS Dateline 2009. One of the main themes of Achieving the Dream is using data to drive improvement in student success. We believe that everyone should be looking at outcomes data to focus on how we can improve.

- For that reason, we envisioned creating a Student Success Certificate to encourage all faculty (initially) and eventually all classified personnel and administrators to think about data and professional development and how these two pieces can be combined to improve student outcomes. While a Student Success Certificate is not yet designed for classified staff and administrators, a similar certificate will be developed for them to look at college processes.
- Dr. Suarez approved the implementation of the Student Success Certificate after it was discussed/endorsed through two faculty focus groups and the Achieving the Dream Core Team. It is not mandatory but we hope most of the current full-time faculty and all new faculty that we hire will participate. The Certificate is modeled on the Stage One and Stage Two Technology Certifications created by the Virginia Community College System in 1993. Our feeling was that if technological literacy was important enough to recognize with a certification, then so were demonstrated instances of attempts to improve teaching and learning.

To obtain a MECC Student Success Certificate, teaching faculty members will demonstrate that they have:

1) identified and critically reviewed recent student outcomes data for a course(s) or program(s) for which the faculty member is responsible. (Administrative faculty will review outcomes data related to the administrative unit, the College's Performance Measures, and Dateline 2009.)

2) completed professional development to improve identified, specific student/divisional outcomes.

3) used data to establish a baseline for improvement, and applied new or improved strategies in developing goals and a timetable for improved outcomes. The timetable and goals will be included in each Division's Annual Plan for 2007-2008.

- Full-time teaching faculty members, who elect to participate, should submit a *Student Success Certificate Application Form* to their supervisor by May 1, 2007. When the project is completed, the *Student Success Certificate Approval Form* and attachments will be reviewed and approved by a three-person subcommittee of the Professional Development Committee. These forms are available on MECC's Achieving the Dream website.
- The Certificates will be added to personnel files and can be a positive contribution for discussion during the annual performance review process. The Certificates may also be used as part of your Individual Development plan and/or in support of applications for promotion or multi-year contracts. It is not mandatory and if you choose not to do it, it will not reflect negatively on your performance rating.

- MECC's Achieving the Dream Committees will be organizing some workshops and meetings this Spring 2007 to help faculty members obtain on-campus training to meet the professional development requirements for the Certificate. Some of these activities (such as the learning communities and active/collaborative learning training) will be promoted during sessions today. In addition, faculty members can meet the professional development requirements by documenting other training/professional development activities that are completed in the coming year specifically related to improving student or program outcomes. A number of professional development activities which can be used to meet certificate requirements are described in the Certificate Application.
- As you think about what I've presented, you can see that the Certificate ties into the things we are already doing. Our program review requires that you examine your programs or disciplines using data and make changes based on that data. The Certificate allows you to formalize to a greater degree some of the things you are already doing and receive Professional Development to help you with the effort.

To reiterate: I think that this certificate is important for 3 reasons:

1. it will help us focus on teaching and learning
  2. it will help us focus on using data to make changes and decisions
  3. it helps link professional development and program review
- Finally, while program review and evaluation is mandatory, obtaining this Certificate is not. I do encourage you to apply for it because it will help us focus on one of the most important parts of our job: teaching and learning. If we change the conversation to one that makes teaching and learning the core of our institution, our student success initiatives and our annual planning process will move to a higher level.