

Steering Committee Highlights



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Highlights of the March 24, 2014, Steering Committee meeting

Reporting on changes to noncredit certificates, Dr. Arvid Spor stated that in an effort to reward English language learners with a certificate documenting their progress, Citrus College noncredit faculty have packaged five noncredit English as a Second Language (ESL) courses into a sequential three-tier certificate program. Students completing the program will ultimately be able to demonstrate readiness to communicate with native English speakers and use authentic English discourse, and either transfer into credit ESL classes at the Level 5 stage of coursework; into college level coursework; or into an English speaking occupation. Also, following the recommendation of the advisory committee for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Technician Program, HVAC courses now lead to a noncredit certificate rather than an AS degree or credit certificate, allowing students to quickly complete the program.

As the Accrediting Commission (ACCJC) requires that colleges complete an annual report, Dr. Arvid Spor and Ms. Roberta Eisel are in the process of preparing this year's response, and reported on the progress toward the March 31 deadline.

Dr. Robert Sammis, Director of Human Resources provided a literature review on an article by Thomas Brock, based on a study that provided statistical evidence demonstrating that historically underrepresented students have gained significant access to a college education, but that the real issue facing universities and community colleges is student success. The article, "Young Adults and Higher Education: Barriers and Breakthroughs to Success," asserts that "From a public policy standpoint, it makes little sense to promote college access if students are failing once they get there." The author defines student success as persistence and completion. The article reviews several programs implemented by various universities and community colleges to address three focus areas of student success: remedial education, student support services, and financial aid.

Studies also show that "remedial education" seemed to delay completion and served to segregate underprepared students from the rest of the college student population. The author also states that the one of the key issues for student completion must be to address the need for guidance to students as to what classes they need to take and the sequence of those classes. Additionally, despite the increase in federal financial aid, it is unknown how these funds promote higher education attendance or completion. The author suggests that colleges look at performance based scholarships.

Committee discussion centered on which of the interventions studied the committee would agree was primary in improving persistence and completion rates at Citrus.

The minutes of Steering Committee meetings may be viewed at: <http://www.citruscollege.edu/admin/president/steering/Pages/default.aspx>