

**Flexible Pathways Update**  
**January 26, 2016**  
submitted by  
**Carol Bruess and Kendra Garrett, Co-Chairs**  
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Flexible Pathways is transitioning leadership. It is with deep sadness and utmost respect we acknowledge the profound leadership and expertise Michael Jordan provided our Task Force since its inception. Michael was committed, smart, thoughtful, and ever-present. His good work carries on in us and in the work of the task force. Carol Bruess continues as co-chair, formerly replacing Kendra and now replacing Michael. Kendra Garrett has returned from sabbatical and has resumes her co-chair role.

The entire FPTF met three times during fall 2015. Meetings focused on reports and discussion with and from subcommittees; discussion and sharing of information and updates from SPOC; and discussion of progress on our TF charge. Mike Cogan was invited and provided Trello explanation and onboarding at our December meeting. We invite you to review our Trello board and subgroup cards.

Flexible Pathways has three subcommittees, each assertively addressing goals set up early in the fall (see summer report) and each making significant progress. The primary work of each subcommittee is summarized below. We have two content areas, articulated in the original charge to FPTF, that have not yet been actively addressed: 1) internships/externships, and 2) accelerated degree programs. We discuss those at the end of this report.

### **Subcommittee Updates**

#### **Subcommittee: Integrated Student Success/Integrated Academic Services**

This subcommittee is charged with improving student pathways through the university of St. Thomas by exploring and proposing models for enhancing and integrating academic support services across the university. During fall 2015, the group has been:

- **mapping** where student services are being offered and what the usage of such services actually is across the university;
- **conducting a gap analysis** to determine where academic student services are lacking/not available and/or not being accessed;
- **developing a survey** to gather and assess the desires/thoughts of stakeholders (students, faculty and staff) about academic service experiences, needs, and wishes; and
- **compiling a comprehensive literature review and examining other universities' concepts and models** of academic student services. Their work has included learning about, assessing, and documenting the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of concepts and multiple existing models across the country (e.g., "Learning Commons" and "Student Success Center" etc).

**Goal by March 15, 2016:** Based on all of the above, the subcommittee will propose a model or models for what Integrated Student Success/Integrated Academic Services (the name is still being debated by the group) could/should look like at St. Thomas. Our Task Force will hold a public forum to present the model/s to the UST community and seek feedback before advancing final recommendations to SPOC, and then to Drs. Sullivan and Plumb and the UST community.

**Question to Richard and Corri about membership:** Given **Wendy Wyatt's** new role and charge to advance a student success center initiative, we propose (with your approval and with Wendy's agreement) that she immediately become an official member and active voice on this subcommittee. She came to the last fall meeting of this subcommittee. Co-leaders of the subcommittee, Vern Klobassa and Susan Callaway, very much welcome Wendy's participation. And as a member of the subcommittee – also joining late in fall after learning of some of the struggles this subcommittee – I (Carol) believe it's crucial Wendy's voice and leadership enter this conversation immediately.

*Members of the academic services/integrated student success subgroup are:* Susan Callaway (co-chair) and Vern Klobassa (Co-chair), Susan Anderson, Linda Baughman-Terry, Carol Bruess, Diane Crist, Georgia Fisher (newly added as of January), and Andrea Koeppel.

### **Subcommittee: Online and Blended Courses**

This subcommittee is charged with creating flexible pathways through the university via online and blended course growth. Their work has been excellent and has been well coordinated with Ed Clark and his IRT team. A brief summary of their work is here; please see Trello for detailed lists of their goals and accomplishments.

- As they work to **improve systems for designating online/blended courses** and course registration, they are coordinating with Mike Cogan and adjusting their recommendations to fit with the new ClassFinder.
- They had been working actively on a **process for designating online/blended courses**. They have placed that task on hold, briefly, until the new AVP for Academic Technology is hired.
- They are **developing a set of templates for online courses** with the goal of providing a consistent look/feel for all online courses to be recommended as soon as the IRT evaluation of learning management systems is complete.
- They are working to determine what courses are currently offered online during summer and **plan to have 6-8 high demand core courses available online** by summer 2017.
- They will provide **recommendations to the new STELAR organization for fellowships and other incentives and rewards to faculty** for developing online courses and mentoring other faculty by summer of 2016.

*Members of the Online and Blended Courses Subcommittee:* Ann Johnson (chair), Kate Lockwood, Elizabeth Smith, Lynn Stansbury-Brusnahan, and Peter Weinhold

### **Subcommittee: Transfer and Community College Relationships (TCCR)**

This subcommittee is charged with improving flexibility of transfer students from community colleges to UST with a focus on 2+2 agreements with a set of local schools; developing improved relationships with all local community colleges; and with improving transferability of core requirement courses and major field courses in popular major programs.

- Joe Herrera has been charged by Dan Meyer to develop a **series of 2+2 agreements with four community colleges**: Century College, Inver Hills Community College, Normandale, and St. Paul College. In communication with staff and leaders at these schools, as well as with faculty and department chairs from four majors most popular among transfer students to UST (Business, Communication and Journalism, Engineering, and Psychology), the subcommittee has been articulating and drafting plans that would allow transfer students in those majors to graduate in four years. The four sets of articulations would serve as a pilot, with plans for expanding to most other departments and majors at UST.
- The subcommittee's next steps include **identifying barriers to transfer of credits** from community colleges, and developing a **range of recommendations** for addressing those barriers. The committee will also articulate the way some of our competitors are accepting transfer students, and how UST transfer policies affect student decisions on transfers to UST versus competitors.
- Most members of this subcommittee were also those who worked over the summer to make recommendations to the president and provost regarding the development of a two-year college. Those recommendations are currently in progress and Jill Manske has taken over the leadership of this project.

*Members of the TCCR subcommittee are:* Joe Herrera (co-chair), Carol Bruess (co-chair, to be replaced by Kendra Garrett now back from sabbatical), Michael Jordan (past), Linda Baughman-Terry, Terry Langan, John Martens (sabbatical, fall 2015), Buffy Smith, and Don Weinkauf.

### **Topics not yet addressed by Flexible Pathways:**

There are two areas from the initial charge to the FP Committee that have not yet been addressed: internships/externships and accelerated degree program. Given our focus on the 2-year college proposal and the three active subcommittees above, we have not yet determined the best way to address these two outstanding issues. The Integrated Student Success subcommittee might be an appropriate location for the internships/externships charge after the group makes progress toward their current work and advances a model or models for development in spring. We might want to develop an additional subcommittee to address an accelerated degree program proposal.

### **An emerging topic for Flexible Pathways:**

An area that has emerged multiple times in Flexible Pathways Task Force and subcommittee discussions is the relative **inflexibility of faculty contracts**. We wonder if

and/or how to address as a TF: As we look specifically at online classes and accelerated programs, how does the current structure of faculty contracts help and/or hinder supporting flexible pathways for students moving through the university?

*Members of the Flexible Pathways Task Force are:* Carol Bruess and Kendra Garrett (co-chairs), Susan Anderson, Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan, Don Weinkauff, Linda Baughman-Terry, Rama Hart, Susan Callaway, Diane Crist, Joe Herrera, Ann Johnson, Peter Weinhold, Vern Klobassa, Andrea Koeppe, Kate Lockwood, John Martens, and Buffy Smith.