

Flexible Pathways Task Force
April Report
Submitted May 2, 2016
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The FPTF is happy to report we've made more significant progress this past month, and have even completed one of our primary TF goals. (Go FPTF! ☺)

APRIL MEETING QUICK SUMMARY: Our full TF met on April 12 and received updates from each of our subcommittees: 1) Integrated Academic Student Services (Student Success Center); 2) Blended and Online Learning; and 3) Transfer and Community College Relationships. At that meeting, our TF also welcomed Linda Baughman-Terry and Aaron Macke to discuss how the concept of a two-year residency requirement for all students might impact the realities of flexibility and pathways for students (financially, experientially, academically, and otherwise) into and through St. Thomas.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. **INTEGRATED ACADEMIC STUDENT SERVICES.** The Integrated Student Services subcommittee—working on developing an innovative Student Success Center—presented their final report and models to the entire FPTF on April 12. The task force unanimously voted to approve their report and advance it to strategic planning oversight co-chairs Drs. Carvalho and Plumb, who have since approved and moved it forward for implementation by Drs. Wendy Wyatt and Karen Lange. The report emphasized the collaborative, strength-based nature of accessible, integrated support services and how we should/must integrate and enhance academic support services, especially for undergraduates. We want to thank the entire subcommittee for their more than 1.5 year of work, and for putting forward thoughtful, complex, and exciting models for better supporting students on their path into, through, and out of UST.
2. **BLENDED AND ONLINE LEARNING.** This group continues to work well with ITS in studying and securing STELAR, developing/exploring incentives and launching a Fellow opportunity for faculty to create/mentor other faculty, and are continuing planning and proposed implementation of multiple online courses in summer of 2017. One of the key questions we will present to the subcommittee in the coming weeks is if the work needs to continue to reside within our Flexible Pathways Task Force (subcommittee), or if it's now time to acknowledge the excellent work they've accomplished in collaboration with ITS, and fully hand off their good efforts for full implementation by ITS staff under the leadership of Ed Clark.
3. **TRANSFER AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE RELATIONSHIPS.** This subcommittee is currently meeting frequently, and planning to write a statement for the Educating for the Future Task Force, requesting they keep front and center in their deliberations the need to maximize flexibility when advancing new core curricula concepts and models. Our statement will urge EFF to acknowledge and consider the essential future need of more widely accepting transfer courses to meet core requirements. It is hoped that such flexibility would allow transfer students greater likelihood of graduating within two years of transferring into St. Thomas if they come into UST with 60 credits, an AA degree, or met requirements of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum agreement. Our subgroup is also considering ways to develop robust conversations and collaborations between St. Thomas faculty/chairs who approve transfer

credits of core courses with the faculty/administrators of local community colleges. We hope for increased communication about the need for flexibility of accepting transfer courses into the core, as well fostering increased knowledge and attention by incoming students to UST's core requirements. Ultimately, we are working to make the transfer process easier while maintaining the value of a St. Thomas education, and increasing the number of transfer students from local community colleges. **This group plans a report to EFF by June 1, and will continue work into the fall of 2017.**

ASHOKA CONVERSATIONS: Co-Chairs Carol Bruess and Kendra Garrett met at length with Adam Kay to discuss ways the Flexible Pathways charge fits with the efforts for UST to become an Ashoka Changemaker Campus. We discussed the exciting possibilities and potential opportunities for Ashoka to integrate/align with the forthcoming Student Success Center. We also discussed the potential for embracing/aligning the Changemaker goals with our forthcoming examination by the FPTF of expanded internships/externships at UST. We believe it wise to plan more discussions with Adam and the Ashoka team over the next many months.

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE CONVERSATIONS: Co-chairs also met with Richard Plumb, Corrie Carvalho, Buffy Smith, and Agapitos Papagapitos to discuss the emerging narratives, and many of the misperceptions around campus, about the proposed two-year college. As a result of that conversation, we committed to having more face-to-face conversations about the value and mission of the two-year college, and helping disabuse our colleagues of some of the myths being advanced.

NEXT TASKS FOR FP: Co-chairs Bruess and Garrett also met April 26 with Corrie Carvalho to discuss next steps for FPTF, to summarize what we have accomplished to date, and to clarify our charge for the future. As a result of that conversation we will be forming two new subcommittees for work during summer and fall 2016: **1) internships/externships; 2) accelerated degree programs at UST.** We plan to consider how best to address these areas over the summer, bringing in people with interest and expertise to help gather information about needs and possible models that could work at St. Thomas. **REQUEST to Corri and Richard:** We welcome suggestions about membership on these two subgroups—people who have passion, excitement, and expertise on these topics.

FINALLY: We hope conclude much of the Flexible Pathways work during the next academic year, although we recognize that implementation of any changes in the core curriculum proposed by Educating for the Future will likely involve further work with the Transfer and Community College Relationships subcommittee. Final note: Kendra Garrett will be leaving the committee at the end of the fall semester when she retires (*insert sad face of co-chair Carol Bruess ☹, who will then be the last-standing survivor of the FPTF; she requests permanent possession of the immunity necklace*).