



December 3, 2015

There is so much that I want to share. MJC is gaining attention at the regional, state, and national levels for our efforts around success and completion. While keeping track of the action plans and activities has become more difficult, the complementary nature of our college SSSP, Equity, and Basic Skills Plans and Title V grant brings all of the efforts together under the framework of Achieving the Dream. A brochure was previewed at yesterday's Academic Senate meeting that maps the connection and activities of our college initiatives. This will be broadly shared on Institute Day, January 8, 2016.

My thoughts have been spinning since I attended the Complete College America (CCA) Completion Academy - Corequisite Remediation at Scale. I went to Indianapolis as one of six representatives of the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium who had opportunity to interact with math and English faculty who have led transformational change of developmental (basic skills) education across their state higher education systems. The magnitude of what these educators have accomplished in cooperation and collaboration with CCA is both daunting and inspiring. The other convening participants were cohorts of state representatives from West Virginia, Hawaii, Illinois, Ohio, New Mexico, and Oklahoma – all states in the process of implementing corequisite remediation statewide. The corequisite model has proven an effective acceleration practice even for students with assessment placement multiple levels below college level and is one of the models that the California Acceleration Project (CAP) has piloted.

Because the Central Valley Region Success and Equity Conference hosted by MJC in October was such a hit (well attended, informative, inspiring, collaborative, and free), we have been asked by our regional partners to host an equity, basic skills, and completion summit on Friday, March 4th. Dr. Tristan Denley, who I enjoyed meeting in Indiana, is among the exceptional faculty leaders that will be featured. The California Acceleration Project, Center for Urban Education, 3CSN, and others are being integrated into the day's activities, so mark your calendar and watch for more information in January.

Wednesday afternoon I had the opportunity to speak briefly with our first cohort of *Passport to College* students. As fifth graders at select local elementary schools, these students were provided a guarantee of two years free registration at MJC upon graduation from high school. Our MJC Foundation supports the program by covering the cost of the student registration fees and provides \$250 toward textbooks each term. I asked the students the typical questions about their experience, preparation for finals, and how we can improve and I received the usual answers. But when I asked what surprised them at MJC, a young lady overwhelmed me with her response. She said, "The support we have. In high school, everyone told us that we would be on our own and no one would help us at college. But we have lots of support." Wow. I struggled to focus through the tears as I told the group how special they were and how committed MJC is to their success. What an amazing reflection of the importance of your work.

It is easy to be frustrated by the continued expectation of doing more with less, of closing the equity achievement gap, of supporting under prepared students through completion. But how great to have this reminder of what is really important – the student. A student who is directed, focused, nurtured, engaged, connected, and valued. You are doing amazing work and it is transforming lives.

***Deep integrity in our work speaks to the
connectedness of who we are to what we do.***

Sandy Shugart, Ph.D.

JILL STEARNS, PhD

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