MOHAWK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE TITLE III EVALUATION

Year Four Annual Evaluation Report

Fall 2019

Mohawk Valley Community College
Title III Project – *Pathways to Graduation*
Year Four Annual Evaluation Report

Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) began its current Title III Project –*Pathways to Graduation* – in the fall of 2015. The overall purpose of the project is to improve the quality and effectiveness of the educational experience thus enhancing student success.   With a comprehensive approach, the project strengthens two programmatic components: first, the Student Success Portal, which enables dedicated college professionals to identify at-risk students and support them with individualized guidance, mentorship and assistance from their first entry into the college onward through timely interventions during their academic journey; and second, Gateway Course Customization, which re-energizes the learning experiences through course enhancements that address learner-needs in multiple, engaging, effective ways. Concluding in the fall of 2020, *Pathways to Graduation* will increase successful Gateway Course completion rates by 10%, persistence by 5%, and retention by 10%--with a final outcome of a 5% increase in graduation rates

During the inaugural year of the Title III project, the College contracted with Development Institute, a Boston consulting firm, to conduct the external evaluation with Dr. Katherine German, Vice President, and Dr. Philip Sbaratta, Senior Associate comprising the evaluation team.   Drs. German and Sbaratta have been involved with the design, implementation and evaluation of similar programs since 1980 and have held a variety of leadership roles within higher education over the past forty years. They are currently working

with numerous institutions on the development and evaluation of Title III and Title V projects as well as other strategic change efforts within higher education.

On October 7 and 8, 2019, Drs. German and Sbaratta visited the campus to conduct an annual assessment. Prior to the campus visit, they reviewed the College's overall five-year implementation plan and other related documents, outlining the evaluation criteria specified in the project year as indicated through project objectives, implementation strategies and anticipated results. These criteria have been incorporated into the evaluation report, which follows, for use as benchmarks against which to measure the progress of the project to date.

While on campus for the assessment, the evaluators conducted a series of discussions focusing on the overall goals of the project, its organization and management, as well as progress to date. During these discussions, they met with the Title III Project Director, Lewis Kahler; Activity Director, Ibrahim Rosic; and President Randall VanWagoner. Additionally, the evaluators were scheduled to meet with the following individuals:

Participants	Project Alignment
Jim Lynch, Norma Christman	Starfish Team
Aaron Fried and Shannon Crocker	Guided Pathways
Marie Miknavich	Institutional Research
Rachel Golden, Rachel Simonds, Justin Johnson, Rosemarie Pastorella, Justin Rahn, Jenny Lewis, and Patti Antanavige	Student Support Advisors
Tracy Coulson, Nur Cayirdag, and Eileen Bush	Digital Toolkits Team
Jocelyn Ireland	Instructional Designer
Tom Squires	Vice President Finance & Administration
Jennifer DeWeerth, Stephanie Reynolds, Julie Dewan, Brandon Shaw, Anna Radlowski, Dawson McDermott, Rosemary Mink, Breanne Rathbun, Kristin Raab, Rachel Golden, James Lynch, Jim Roberts, Jocelyn Ireland, James Myers, Jennifer Fanelli, Ruyn Cavic, Marie Miknavich, Steffani DiPierro, and Mark Montgomery	PGP Project Team

Additionally, the evaluators met with students who have used the Commons services and appreciate the assistance they have received. Throughout the evaluation process, participants described their involvement and accomplishments, sharing their commitment to and enthusiasm for the project. These discussions ultimately lead to a series of recommendations for consideration as the project continues into the next year.

Needs Assessment

The College completed a thorough analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, and major problems inhibiting self-sufficiency in concert with the design of its Comprehensive Development Plan. The analysis drew from multiple sources, including the Strategic Plan, CCSSE results, Middle States accreditation report, NCCBP, and other seminal documents, underscoring a single critical problem:

Five out of every ten students drop out within a year;
of those remaining, only two will graduate within three years.

This problem and its underlying weaknesses provide compelling evidence for the need to implement significant improvements in academics, student services, and technological support systems – all aiming to increase student engagement and achievement to graduation. As a result, the overall vitality and self-sufficiency of the institution will be significantly strengthened.

Scope of the Project

A single activity is designed to deliver dramatic improvements in success and achievement as students transition into and through the institution. *Pathways to Graduation* consists of two interrelated components supported by sophisticated technology:

Student Success Portal: A physical and virtual haven for active support of learning and navigating college, the Portal includes predictive analytics, early-alert tracking, Completion Coaching with individualized prescription pathways, a vibrant, resource-rich Learning Commons to co-locate wrap-around instructional and life-challenges supports, and an iTeach Learning Lab for faculty to develop and enhance courses as they model learning for the students.

Gateway Course Customization: Digital course toolkits, lodged in Blackboard, enliven learning engagement in 18 Gateway Courses that are highly enrolled and which currently exhibit large gaps in successful completion. Faculty teams and an Instructional Design Consultant will develop, pilot, implement and provide training to all full- and part-time faculty teaching these courses so that all students benefit from deeper, livelier learning experiences.

The Activity addresses MVCC's key problem and the attendant weaknesses in a synergistic, strategic manner, promoting student success through improved retention, persistence, and graduation rates. In so doing, *Pathways to Graduation* is intended to strengthen both the student experience and the overall vitality of the institution.

Year One Interim Assessment

Guided by an annual implementation plan, the Project's objectives identify the expected gains in student success, achievement, and engagement during the grant period. The Year One objectives focus on the start-up elements of the *Pathways to Graduation*:

1.1 To increase from 0 to 100% student participation in the student success portal enhanced analytics.

1.2 To increase student satisfaction from 4.02 to 4.25 on a 5-point scale on the Student Opinion Survey (SOS).

As a result, it was anticipated that all first-time, full-time matriculated students would participate in enhanced assessment/analytics with 640 students participating in the Learning Commons, 600 of whom would complete the SOS and indicate a 6 percent increase in satisfaction.

At the outset, a significant effort has involved the recruitment and hiring of completion coaches. As of the spring, three highly qualified coaches were hired with an expected start date later in the summer. Similarly, a talented candidate was named to fill the instructional designer/librarian position. Thus, the team was being assembled that would carry forward the objectives of the Activity.

Component 1 – Student Success Portal

Importantly several foundational initiatives were taken. First and foremost, an impressive space for the Learning Commons was identified and an architect selected. Architectural renderings of the space were approved with an expectation that renovations would be initiated immediately with construction and the installation of workstations and technological tools completed and ready for the Fall 2016 semester. The Learning Commons would serve as a multipurpose space to support tutoring, project-based learning, and coaching, as well as space dedicated to faculty for innovation and professional development – a significant addition to the learning environment. With a coffee bar just outside the door, students and faculty would soon be flocking to the Commons. At the same time, the installation of technological support through Starfish was underway including the Connect and Early Alert modules. An implementation committee was charged with the oversight and integration of Starfish within the components of the College and the development of training protocols and schedules, anticipating that the full suite would be up and running in August for use in the Fall of 2016.

Component 2 – Gateway Course Customization

The major academic initiative is to develop electronic toolkits within Blackboard for gateway courses with teams of faculty spending one semester developing the toolkit, a second semester piloting, and a third semester training colleagues. To launch the effort, Dr. Alice Voorhees-Bedard, a consultant in teaching practice and distance learning, provided training to the first cohort of faculty design teams representing English, Mathematics, and Psychology. A two- and one-half-day session focused on the examination of points during the semester where students run into trouble within the courses identified followed with the development of appropriate interventions underscored by the principles of universal design. This initial training was followed by phone conferences and the development of Blackboard materials using the Creative Commons to vet materials while generating considerable synergy among the faculty engaged in the process. Some of the initial work on toolkits included:

- **Psychology**—selection of articles and YouTube videos related to textbook chapters for PY101 by Ruyn Cavic, Hilmar VonStrunck, and Maria Ramos, Chair;
- **English**—creation of supplemental resources for students enrolled in EN101 by Sarah Beck, Mike Faitell, and Jim Roberts, Chair; and
- **Mathematics**—selection of open source materials augmented with guided notes, vocabulary and supplementary instruction by Gary Kulis, John Swistak, and Anna Radlowski, Chair.

With initial work completed, the expectation was that faculty would pilot the toolkits during Fall of 2016, make necessary adjustments and expand their use with their colleagues teaching the same courses thereafter. Clearly the work of the first semester generated excitement with participants suggesting that their efforts 'turned out better than expected'!

At the midpoint of the first year of the project a significant amount of progress had been made in getting both major components of the Activity off the ground. As a result, the year was expected to conclude with the College well positioned to meet and exceed its objectives.

Year One Annual Assessment

For a successful launch of a Title III project, thoughtful and detailed organization is required, and MVCC did an outstanding job, fulfilling the first-year objectives of the *Pathways to Graduation*:

1.1 To increase from 0 to 100% student participation in the student success portal enhanced analytics.

1.2 To increase student satisfaction from 4.02 to 4.25 on a 5-point scale on the Student Opinion Survey (SOS).

Importantly, key personnel were hired to advance the project: Salina Billins, Rachel Golden, and Maimun Khan were hired as Completion Coaches, and Jocelyn Ireland was hired as Instructional Designer. With these individuals aboard, the Activity had a full complement of staff and a clear path to implementation with high expectations for the year ahead.

Component 1—Student Success Portal

The Learning Commons, a major initiative in Year 1, was up and running. In a short span of time, the a centrally located 8,714 square foot space was redesigned and renovated so that the Learning Commons now provides a welcoming, open, and fully-outfitted space for multiple types of learning and support, including an iTeach Lab for enhanced faculty professional development. Early indications suggested a healthy use of the space as students worked independently, in groups, and online. With just a few more details to be completed, a ribbon-cutting ceremony officially marked this new resource for students and faculty.

Housed within the Learning Commons are the Completion Coaches who are the main go-to persons for students. A primary focus for the Coaches is high-risk students enrolled in gateway courses. Initially, students were assigned to Coaches alphabetically, which proved to

be inefficient, requiring the invention of a new assignment system. Nevertheless, Coaches emailed and phoned students, making contact and establishing rapport. To further introduce the coaching process, Coaches visited multiple classrooms, introduced themselves, and handed out business cards, stating "I am your coach--come see me." Initial coaching sessions lead to a success plan and introduce students to multiple campus resources.

A significant part of the support structure for students is the addition of Starfish, a retention and early alert software system. Students, Completion Coaches, and eight faculty members started using Starfish to monitor academic progress of students enrolled in seventeen sections of the first three Gateway courses. During the launch, Educational Technology and the IT department worked collaboratively, resolving glitches as they were identified. The Starfish protocol was initiated through surveys at specific intervals wherein faculty raised flags as well as kudos. During the Fall semester, nine faculty members teaching gateway courses completed two surveys regarding student progress. As a result, 450 students were flagged with Coaches responding. Additionally, over 100 students used Starfish to schedule appointments with tutors and coaches.

In an effort to better assist students in need, Completion Coaches participated in professional development. The three Coaches completed a series of workshops including: *Heroin: The Addicted Person, Family, and Community Concerns, Available Treatment*; *University Partners and Transfer Center Workshop - How to Search for a College or University that Fits You*; and *Center for Family Life and Recovery Presentation*. In addition, Coaches met with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Adult Learner Services to collaboratively support students.

Moreover, the Coaches read *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Succe*ss in preparation for a general discussion about their work and experiences.

Component 2 – Gateway Course Customization

The hiring of Jocelyn Ireland as the instructional design librarian was an important step in stabilizing the course redesign process and providing the necessary guidance to faculty design teams. Among her initial tasks was developing a template for the toolkits which standardized the look and feel of the toolkits across courses. During Year 1, two sets of toolkit design teams worked on creating toolkits of promising best practices:

Toolkit Design Teams	
Spring 2016 (Pilot Phase)	
EN101	Jim Roberts, Mike Faitell
MA110	Anna Radlowski, Gary Kulis, John Swistak
PY101	Maria Ramos, Ruyn Cavic, Hilmar VonStrunck
Fall 2016 (Design Phase)	
EN099	Erin Severs, David Nackley, Kristin Raab
DS090	Gina St. Croix, Brandon Shaw, Norma Chrisman
MA091	Breanne Rathbun, Russ Penner, Gabe Melendez
HI101	Stacey McCall, Bill Zogby, Roman Santos
BI141	Erica Brindisi, Melissa Barlett, Dick Thomas

The first group, Spring 2016, was in a pilot phase. Faculty were experimenting with materials from the Creative Commons, select publishers, the Khan Academy, and other open educational resources. One math faculty member was in the process of developing a series of YouTube videos as supplemental material for MA110. As the Toolkit Teams continued to refine their materials during the pilot phase, they were meeting with the instructional designer every other month. During this period, the eight faculty members collected data to compare successful course completion in sections using toolkits versus sections without toolkits.

In the overall, the MVCC team created a strong foundation for success in this first critical year. With personnel hired, renovations near completion, technology installed, teaching practice enhanced, and student support expanded, MVCC was certainly on the path to institutional transformation.
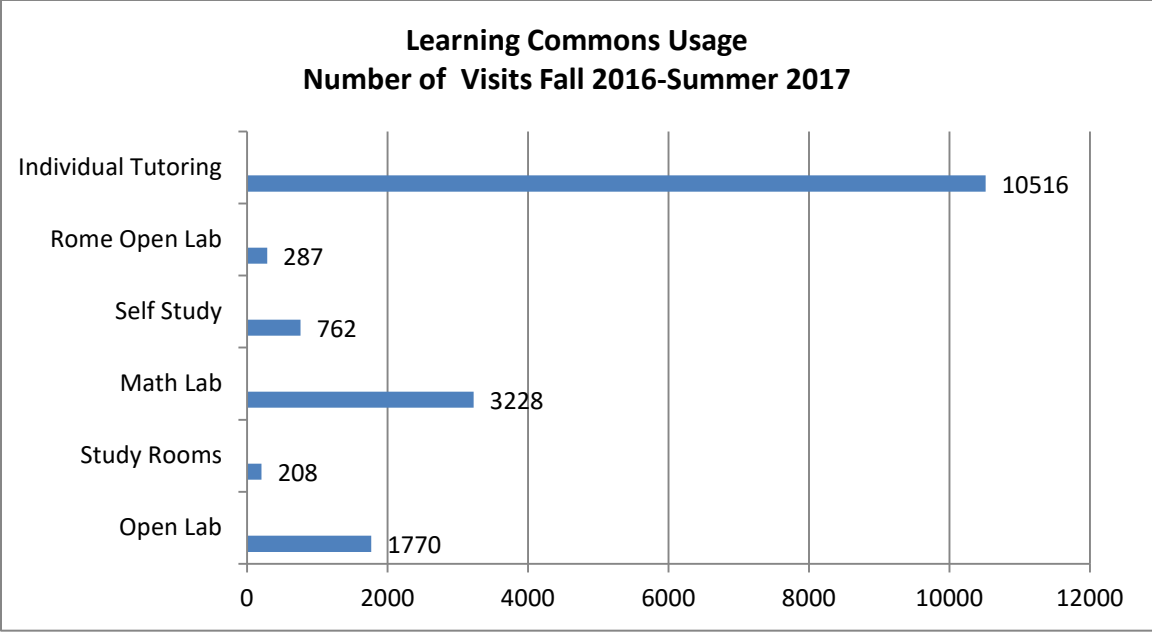
Year Two Annual Assessment

With substantial accomplishments occurring in Year One, MVCC stood on firm footing to advance the project in the second year of the grant. Guiding the initiatives were the following objectives:

- To increase student satisfaction from 4.25 to 4.5 on a 5-point scale on the Student Opinion Survey (SOS).

- To increase student persistence from first-to-second semester from 75% to 76% through the implementation of the Student Success Portal

- To increase student achievement from 63% to 73% through participation in Cohort 1 customized Gateway Courses.

As a result, it was anticipated that students would begin to benefit from the pathways with 300 students improving performance through alerts and interventions, and 423 students increasing achievement through the infusion of active learning strategies in gateways courses.

Component 1 – Student Success Portal

A central feature of the Student Success Portal is the consolidation of numerous support services within the new Learning Commons. Over the last two years, a major renovation was completed, transforming a poorly-used space into a bustling hub of activity that includes tutoring in multiple subjects, collaborative spaces, and numerous computerized workstations. As a consequence, a continuous flow of students occurs (see chart below).

Learning Commons Usage
Number of Visits Fall 2016-Summer 2017

Category	Visits
Individual Tutoring	10516
Rome Open Lab	287
Self Study	762
Math Lab	3228
Study Rooms	208
Open Lab	1770

During Year Two, the Learning Commons logged nearly 17,000 visits, including the Open Lab located at the Rome Campus. From the data, it appeared that individual tutoring and the Math Lab activity predominated; however, demand was increasing across the board. Importantly, the work occurring in the Commons had already produced some positive results:

Comparison of Student Performance by Department						
Cumulative GPA			Term GPA		Re-enrollment Rate [%]	
Department	Attended LC	Did not attend LC	Attended LC	Did not attend LC	Attended LC	Did not attend LC
ARTD	2.84	2.64	2.61	2.50	63.83	52.98
APER	2.03	2.22	1.81	2.24	64.71	40.43
BCCS	2.63	2.62	2.46	2.45	51.42	44.04
EDLS	2.80	2.95	2.72	2.79	62.96	50.00
HLTP	3.16	3.15	3.21	3.02	48.91	28.89
HUEN	2.67	2.57	2.52	2.41	54.61	34.8
MNSC	2.71	2.48	2.46	2.17	38.33	38.30
PSAT	2.94	2.86	2.61	2.84	44.00	40.00
SSPT	2.53	2.57	2.39	2.34	52.45	32.91
ADI	2.45	2.49	2.15	2.45	64.29	48.94

According to the data, students who used Learning Commons services at least 10 times during the last academic year had higher cumulative and term GPAs than students who never attended the Learning Commons. In addition, students who utilized the Learning Commons services had significantly higher re-enrollment rates than students who never used those services.

A second critical element of the Student Success Portal is the availability of coaching, with coaches' offices located in the Commons, thus making their services readily available. The coaching model evolved over time. Initially, coaches worked only with students enrolled in redesigned gateway courses. However, that approach was not efficient, in that students could wind up with multiple coaches.   Now with five coaches on staff by the end of Year Two, all students were assigned a coach with each coach connected to particular programs of study. As a result, from Fall 2016 through Summer 2017, the coaches logged over 500 coaching hours. However, determining equitable caseloads remained a challenge to be addressed going forward. In any case, a focus group of students, interviewed by the evaluators, was most appreciative of the coaching they received—helping students negotiate the challenges of the transition to college while also providing advice to help them solve problems as they arose and promote confidence.

Another support element is the use of Starfish as an alert system. Targeted primarily to students in courses using toolkits with the coaches implementing outreach, faculty were both raising flags and providing kudos. However, at this juncture Starfish had only modest success with approximately 35 percent of faculty using the system. As a result, the Title III team was

considering the development of a more intensive marketing campaign accompanied by a relaunch in an effort to involve faculty on a larger scale.

Component 2 - Gateway Couse Customization

With the selection of the new instructional design librarian, Jocelyn Ireland, the design process for gateway course customization and toolkit development was significantly improved. Focused specifically on the four primary goals of the project addressing student satisfaction, achievement, retention and graduation measures, a four-month development process was outlined during which participants meet regularly with the designer to learn about toolkit design after which they focus on the subjects to be addressed, build content, and elicit collegial feedback prior to piloting. Through this protocol designers receive guidance and support both from the instructional designer and from their colleagues during the development process which is followed by a pilot and refinement, implementation and assessment. Features of the toolkits include universal design principles, active learning activities, increased student interactions, expanded audiovisuals and technological tools, flexibility and use of multiple approaches all linked to life lessons. Built with an intentional focus on three fundamental neural networks, the toolkits highlight the focus on those problematic skills and concepts that often impede student achievement and inhibit progress.   And so far, the evidence of usage and impact looks good!

August – November 2017 Toolkit Statistics			
Course	**Hits**	**Non-creator Hits**	**% Teaching Faculty**
Cohort 2			
DS 090	171	142	100
BI 141	42	2	100
EN 099	291	154	60
HI 101	1425	142	67
MA 091	584	147	83

Cohort 1			
EN 101	224	148	44
PY 101	273	182	33
MA 110	806	516	72

In Year Two, Cohort 1 Design Teams completed the pilot phase and implemented course modifications in three targeted courses. Early results looked promising across the board:
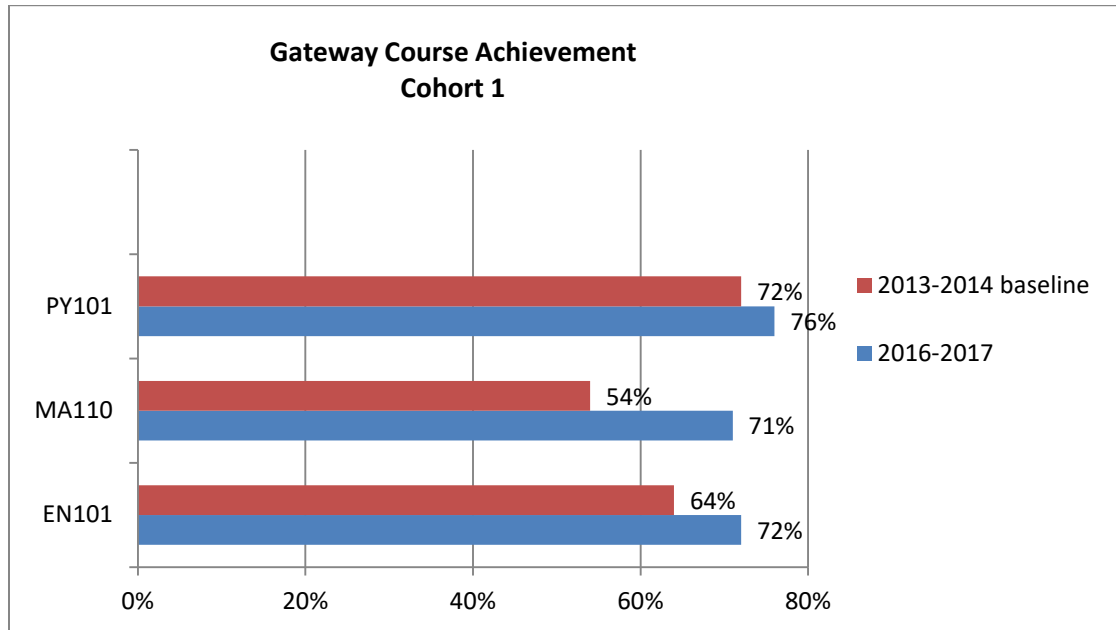
For the three courses that comprised Cohort 1, student achievement (a grade of C or better) increased by an average of 17 percent, with the most striking gain in MA 110 where achievement increased from 54% to 71%. These data suggest that the course redesign and resulting toolkits have, in fact, contributed to increased student performance, a realization that fueled continued gateway course customization.

Simultaneously, Cohort 2 teams who began their work with the new development process were piloting customized course materials, and Cohort 3 teams were in the design phase. With the clarification of the expectations and deliverables of the design phase and the

support of the instructional designer, faculty found the kind of technical and design assistance required to support them in their effort to confidently experiment and innovate.

Taken together, the two components of the project, the portal and course customization, had already begun to show positive results college-wide: student achievement had increased in each of the three Cohort 1 courses piloted, while the fall-to-spring persistence rate had increased from 75 percent to 77 percent, exceeding the target. With these results it was clear that the MVCC *Pathways to Graduation* project was moving forward on multiple fronts, making gains on critical student success measures, and implementing long-lasting change that benefits students. At the end of the year the momentum was strong, commodity that always bodes well for continued progress and overall success.

Year Three Annual Assessment

With the fundamentals established in the first two years, Year Three focused on advancing the major elements of the project. Providing guideposts were the following objectives:

- To increase student satisfaction from 4.5 to 4.8 on a 5-point scale on the Student Opinion Survey.

- To increase student persistence from first-to-second semester from 75% to 78% through the implementation of the Student Success Portal.

- To increase student achievement from 63% to73% through participation in cohort 2's customized Gateway Courses.

As a result, over 750 students were expected to benefit from the pathways with 900 students increasing achievement as a result of the early alert and intervention and over 1, 124 students increasing achievement through the use of active learning strategies in gateway courses.

Component 1 – Student Success Portal

An essential feature of Component 1 is a proactive coaching model, a primary support system for entering students. In Year Three, the complete coaching staff was assembled to ensure that every student has a coach. Essentially, the coaches had been assigned programs/majors so that they served as liaison between student support and academic affairs, establishing connections with departmental faculty and leadership. Providing tailored support, the coaches had a devoted following of students who had benefited from their assistance.
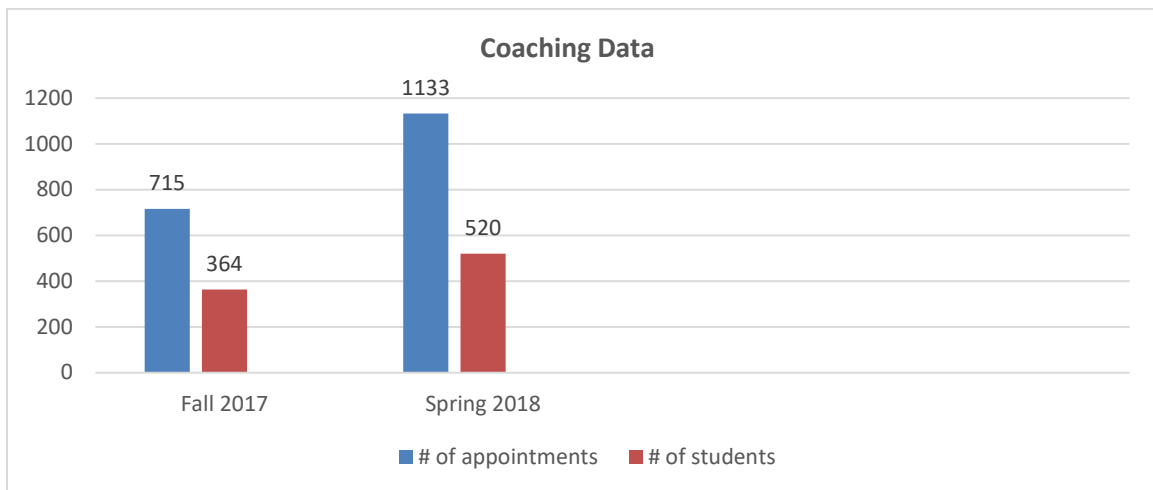
Coaching Data

The data suggested increasing impact of coaching availability; with a full complement of coaches, students had greater access to services and the interventions had greater impact.

Another important coaching activity involves working with the Starfish system to reach out to students who have flags. During Year 3, coaches cleared almost 8,000 flags, raised by faculty or generated automatically by Starfish.

Overview of Starfish Activities				
Items Raised		**Breakdown of Items by Method**		
Item Name	**Total Raised**	**Manually Raised**	**Survey Raised**	**System Raised**
FLAGS	**7906**	**1295**	**4321**	**2290**
Attendance Concern	1591	436	1155	0

Class Materials	4	4	0	0
Drop from course	43	43	0	0
Failing Grade at Midterm	429	53	376	0
General Concern	153	153	0	0
In Danger of Failing	1304	354	950	0
I Need Help	6	6	0	0
In Need of Tutoring	23	23	0	0
Low Participation	74	8	66	0
Low Quiz/Test Scores	315	46	269	0
Meet with Completion Coach	228	18	210	0
Missing/Late Assignments	444	23	421	0
No Show	191	15	176	0
Not Meeting Requirements/Completing Assignments	640	81	559	0
Poor Midterm grade	2290	0	0	2290
Preparedness	171	32	139	0
KUDOS	**5857**	**495**	**5362**	**0**
Engaged in Class	2282	14	2268	0
Grades Are Starting to Improve	103	27	76	0
Great Participation	181	181	0	0
Keep Up the Good Work	2550	97	2453	0
Outstanding Academic Performance	4	4	0	0
Your Extra Efforts Show	737	172	565	0
REFERRALS	**117**	**66**	**51**	**0**
C3 Referral	2	2	0	0
Course Content Tutoring Referral	63	63	0	0
Writing or Math Tutoring Referral	52	1	51	0
TO DOS	**28**	**28**	**0**	**0**
Follow Up	28	28	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	**13908**	**1884**	**9734**	**2290**

The data suggested that Starfish flags covered a large set of "concerns," some of which seemed

vague or open to interpretation. At the same time, the source of the flag ranged from a "one-

off" manual flag to those generated by surveys. These variations put additional burden on coaches who needed to investigate the particulars of the flag before initiating an intervention.

Another important feature of the Student Success Portal is the comprehensive Learning Commons, which now is a hub for student support. In addition to being a home for the coaches, the Learning Commons offers a wide range of tutoring support in a number of academic areas by professional and peer tutors. During Year Three, academic assistance was provided by 2 full-time tutors, 38 part-time professional tutors and 16 peer (student) tutors. Additionally, 9 full-time and 22 part-time faculty members held their office hours in the Learning Commons and offered additional support to students. In all, individualized tutoring was provided for 38 different courses.

Student Support Summary			
Fall 2017			
Academic Support	Total # of hours	#of Individual Visits	Total # of Visits
Open Lab	4,883.5	1,513	4,391
Study Rooms	256.25	83	158
Math Lab	3,338.75	282	2,415
Self-Study	49.5	43	48
Rome-Open Lab	94.5	36	71
One-on-one Tutoring	3,585	2,089	4,779
Total	**12,207.5**	**4,046**	**11,862**
Spring 2018			
Academic Support	Total # of hours	#of Individual Visits	Total # of Visits
Open Lab	2,693.5	919	2,569
Study Rooms	122	58	86
Math Lab	2,407.25	196	1,676
Self-Study	48.5	30	43
Rome-Open Lab	21.25	17	21
One-on-one Tutoring	3,626	1,804	4,610
Total	**8,918.5**	**3,024**	**9,005**
Summer 2018			
Academic Support	Total # of hours	#of Individual Visits	Total # of Visits

Open Lab	29.25	20	26
Study Rooms	N/A	N/A	N/A
Math Lab	566.75	57	384
Self-Study	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rome-Open Lab	1	1	1
One-on-one Tutoring	260.5	79	255
Total	**857.5**	**157**	**666**

As a precursor, all tutors attend a seven-hour training that focused on creating positive learning experience, clarifying content on students' level using different learning styles, and helping students attain higher academic achievement.

Clearly, one of the important outcomes is to assess impact of implemented interventions. Below is a preliminary comparative examination of achievement and retention of students who used Learning Commons' services and those who did not.

Comparison of GPA and Retention 2017-2018						
Cumulative GPA			**Term GPA**		**Re-enrollment Rate [%]**	
Department	**Attended LC**	**Did not attend LC**	**Attended LC**	**Did not attend LC**	**Attended LC**	**Did not attend LC**
ARTD	2.74	2.67	2.69	2.63	73.42	67.75
APER	2.54	2.42	2.63	2.30	84.21	60.67
BCCS	2.63	2.53	2.50	2.41	72.74	61.95
EDLS	2.89	2.84	2.78	2.74	80.75	71.12
HLTP	3.17	3.13	2.97	3.11	76.08	61.34
HUEN	2.62	2.50	2.56	2.39	71.63	59.03
MNSC	2.82	2.64	2.60	2.44	62.96	62.30
PSAT	2.89	2.89	2.82	2.87	81.18	66.11
SSPS	2.62	2.46	2.60	2.33	73.35	56.03
ADI	2.09	2.33	2.07	2.24	62.50	59.49

In almost every academic department, students who used the Learning Commons did better academically and were more likely to be retained.

Component 2 – Gateway Course Customization

A correlative to the Student Success Portal is the ongoing development of toolkits that feature approaches, assignments, and classroom activities that can be a resource for faculty adopting recommendations from colleagues. Working with an instructional design specialist, the following PGP Toolkit Teams designed and piloted toolkits for a variety of gateway courses:

Spring 2016
EN101
Jim Roberts, chair
Mike Faitell

MA110
Anna Radlowski, chair
Gary Kulis
John Swistak

PY101
Maria Ramos, Chair
Ruyn Cavic
Hilmar VonStrunck

Fall 2016
EN099
Erin Severs, chair
David Nackley
Kristen Raab

DS090
Gina St. Croix, chair
Brandon Shaw
Norma Chrisman

MA091
Breanne Rathbun, chair
Russ Penner
Gabe Melendez

HI101
Stacey McCall, chair
Bill Zogby
Roman Santos

BI141
Erica Brindisi, chair
Melissa Barlett
Dick Thomas

Spring 2017
SO101
Diana Ayers-Darling
Dina Radeljas

AC115
Robert Huyck
Christine Van Namee

Summer 2017
MA115
Anna Radlowski

Fall 2017

DS051
Gina St. Croix
Rachel Golden

IS101
Rosemary Fuoco
Robert Huyck

HS101
Kelsey Freeman
Cheryl Plescia

CJ101
Troy Little
Rich Kelly

Over time, the purpose and scope of the toolkits have been clarified, leading to a more uniform approach and framework. Additionally, with the support of the instructional designer several new components have been added to each toolkit:

- Added study strategies using retrieval practice, interleaving, and spaced practice in each toolkit
- Added an Accessibility section in each toolkit and highlighted accessibility conversion tools and accessibility apps (part of UDL efforts)
- Updated syllabi in toolkits to be more accessible with stylized headings and images with alt text
- Created new library research guides and made them available digitally through the toolkits

And several specific developments were completed within targeted courses under the guidance of the instructional designer:

- Designed three renewable assignments tied to the OER textbook for the Biology 141 toolkit in collaboration with Dr. Melissa Barlett. The assignments included a grading rubric, assignment description, and a sample completed assignment.
- Assisted IS101 instructor in creating and captioning five tutorial videos for the toolkit.
- Led the CJ101, IS101, DS051, HS101, and MA115 faculty in their piloting and implementation phases.

Throughout the year significant initiatives were taken to expand and improve toolkits even as efforts to improve consistency in terms of how toolkits are used, who uses them, and what overall purpose they serve continued as development moved forward.

In the end, the overall purpose of the toolkits initiative is to increase student achievement. An examination of academic performance in the targeted gateway courses indicates an overall improvement in course completion with a grade of 'C' or better:

Course	Base Line 2014	2018	% Increase/Decrease
AC115	49	61.2	25%
BI141	61	62	2%
CJ101	73	60	-18%
DS051	86	78.8	-8%

DS090	80	83.1	4%
EN099	47	58.4	24%
EN101	64	67.9	6%
HI101	61	72.4	19%
HS101	67	61.2	-9%
IS101	64	62.6	-2%
MA091	43	53.5	24%
MA110	54	61.1	13%
MA115	58	59.3	2%
PY101	72	70	-3%
SO101	73	69.9	-4%

Ten of the fifteen gateway courses showed an increase in student achievement, some by double digit improvement, with an average increase of 11.9%. Next the faculty engaged will need to examine their efforts carefully to identify the ways and means of improving on this assessment going forward, whether they have already increased achievement or not, to ensure consistent improvements in achievement across all targeted courses and sections.

These efforts to improve student achievement in gateway courses were bolstered by professional development and support organized and delivered by the instructional designer:

- Automatically created Blackboard accounts for new toolkit instructors and reached out to them in-person (when possible) and by email regarding toolkit content and availability with 69% of the faculty on the LMS college wide;
- Created three screencast tutorials to promote toolkits;
- Trained several faculty members on Blackboard course design, toolkit usage, and educational technologies;
- Presented at Faculty Caucus on digital toolkits;
- Presented at an adjunct workshop on emerging educational technologies and the digital toolkits;
- Presented at MVCC Institutes in January and August on toolkits in the implementation phase;
- Presented at the MVCC Institute on video compliance and captioning; and
- Presented at All Academic Meeting on the accessibility conversion tool as part of UDL efforts.

Complementing these efforts is the iTeach Lab, a unique facility supported through the PGP project to ensure the availability of continuing professional development. With over 500 hours logged, the Lab was widely used by various staff and students including toolkit team meetings and trainings, Starfish training, JumpStart instruction sessions, Summer classes, study groups, CSTEP, completion coach meetings, Learning Commons staff monthly meetings, tutor training, faculty technology trainings, tutorial creation meetings, Math supplemental instruction, interviews, New Faculty Institute trainings, and webinar viewings.

At the end of the third year, the news was good! Through both PGP components, Year Three saw positive persistence results. For Fall 2017 to Spring 2018, the rate of persistence was 78.07 percent; thus, MVCC reached its target set for Year Three. In sum, the accomplishments of Year Three positioned the College to formalize and build on its successes in the final two years of the project.

Year Four Annual Assessment

Year Four, the penultimate year of the grant, presents particular special challenges, bringing independent projects into a coherent whole, determining impact, and leading to institutionalization. Guiding the Activity were the following objectives:

- To increase student persistence from first to second semester from 78% to 80% through the implementation of the Student Success Portal.

- To increase student achievement from 63% to73% through participation in Cohort 3 customized gateway courses.

- To increase fall-to-fall retention from 53% to 60% through the implementation of the Pathway to Graduation.

- To increase the three-year graduation rate from 21% to 24% through the implementation of the Pathway to Graduation.

During the fourth year, MVCC galvanized the work of the preceding three years to formulate a robust guided pathways structure. With the leadership of the Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, faculty and staff were challenged to re-imagine the student experience from admission to graduation.

Academic Initiatives

Through participation in a variety of professional development institutes sponsored by AACC and SUNY, faculty and staff developed a framework for guided pathways tailored to MVCC. As part of this effort, multiple cross-component work groups were formed to tackle various issues in the development of guided pathways. A Guided Pathways Council, led by Professors Shannon Crocker and Aaron Fried, coordinates the effort and shepherds implementation.

Among the first implementation steps, the Academic component was reorganized into six schools: Art; STEM; Health Sciences; Humanities and Cultural Studies; Public and Human Services; and Business and Hospitality. As part of this effort, programs of study were placed into the appropriate school. Departments reviewed and refined courses and sequencing, in some cases developing a common first semester for related or similar programs; for example, the four early education options now have a common first semester, allowing students to change programs within the field of early education without losing credits. Refinement of programs of study was amplified by continuing curriculum mapping that provides students with clear milestones for success.

Along with the guided pathways work, other work teams examined developmental education curriculum in an effort to accelerate progress to college-level courses. With multiple

measures in place, both the English and Math Departments eliminated all but the lowest level of developmental coursework. Incorporating integrated learning, the developmental education courses use "recitation sessions" to reinforce key issues and topics covered in the classroom.

At the same time, continued refinement of course toolkits occurred; over the four years, 16 toolkits were developed. Moreover, with a launch of a revised website, the toolkits can easily be accessed by full-time and adjunct faculty in an effort to increase their utility and expand the accessibility of the resource.

Course Toolkits		
EA101	MA110	PY101
EN099	DS090	MA091
HI101	SO101	AC115
MA115	DS051	IS101
CJ101	BI216	BI217
DI141	MA110 (Recitation)	

Along with toolkit development, the Learning Commons continues to be a hub of activity. Often filled to capacity, the Learning Commons provides a welcoming learning space, technology, and services to help students achieve their academic goals. Students receive individualized and student-centered tutoring in a wide range of subjects. Completion coaches were also available to provide a holistic approach to eliminate any barriers to academic success. Computer workstations, scanners, and printers add to the wealth of resources in the Learning Commons.

Throughout Year Four, academic support was provided for 36 different courses by 2 full-time tutors, 28 part-time professional tutors and 19 peer (student) tutors. Additionally, 5 full-time and 16 part-time faculty members held their office hours in the Learning Commons and offered additional support to students. As in the previous semester, academic support in the

Learning Commons was available through walk-in and by appointment to accommodate increasing demand.

Overall, the total number of academic support hours has increased by 31% when compared to Year 3 attributable to several circumstances:

1. The Learning Commons staff made proactive efforts to reach out to as many students as possible and encouraged them to utilize available support. These efforts include: numerous class visits throughout the semester, encouraging faculty to send students to the Learning Commons, posting appealing promotional materials around the campus, and using social media.

2. Specialized tutor trainings at the beginning of the semester helped improve the quality of services we provide.

3. Providing diverse tutoring hours (weekend and evening hours) attracted more students to utilize our services.

4. Completion Coaches were connecting struggling students with academic support.

This increase in Learning Commons usage is demonstrated in data gathered over Year Four 4:

Fall 2018			
Academic Support	Total # of hours	#of Individual Visits	Total # of Visits
Open Lab	7,430.25	1,525	5,362
Study Rooms	71.75	43	60
Math Lab	3,903.75	362	2,716
Rome-Open Lab	19.75	14	18
One-on-one Tutoring	3,579.75	1,943	4,769
Total	**15,005.25**	**3,887**	**12,925**
Spring 2019			
Academic Support	Total # of hours	#of Individual Visits	Total # of Visits
Open Lab	4,119	899	3,308
Study Rooms	274.25	88	192
Math Lab	4,978.25	302	3,252
Rome-Open Lab	20	16	17
One-on-one Tutoring	3,390.5	1,928	4,474
Total	**12,782**	**3,233**	**11,243**
Summer 2019			
Academic Support	Total # of hours	#of Individual Visits	Total # of Visits

Open Lab	47.25	22	47
Study Rooms	3.5	4	4
Math Lab	651.25	46	351
Rome-Open Lab	2.25	2	2
One-on-one Tutoring	315.5	95	306
Total	**1,019.75**	**169**	**710**

This steady increase in usage documents the effectiveness of Learning Commons' services, aided by a cadre of tutors, who attend discipline-specific training and provide essential support.

Importantly, the range of services has produced positive impact:

Comparison of GPA and Retention Fall 2018					
Cumulative GPA		Term GPA		Retention [%]	
Department	Attended Learning Commons	Did not attend Learning Commons	Attended Learning Commons	Did not attend Learning Commons	Attended Learning Commons	Did not attend Learning Commons
ARTD	2.82	2.75	2.80	2.70	86.11	76.04
APER	2.43	2.08	2.31	2.04	72.73	56.76
BCCS	2.75	2.48	2.69	2.35	78.39	60.76
EDLS	2.87	2.76	2.79	2.61	87.36	77.84
HLTP	3.15	3.08	2.94	2.78	92.59	89.74
HUEN	2.60	2.42	2.51	2.34	75.58	61.58
MNSC	2.71	2.69	2.47	2.50	91.07	70.83
PSAT	2.97	2.79	2.75	2.78	83.49	72.73
SSPS	2.66	2.46	2.74	2.40	80.47	58.42
ADAI	2.71	2.10	2.86	1.92	91.67	62.50

While the impact was not quite as strong in the spring semester of 2019, the trend was clear:

Comparison of GPA and Retention Spring 2019					
Cumulative GPA		Term GPA		Retention [%]	
Department	Attended Learning Commons	Did not attend Learning Commons	Attended Learning Commons	Did not attend Learning Commons	Attended Learning Commons	Did not attend Learning Commons
ARTD	2.75	2.81	2.65	2.67	53.97	56.32
APER	2.47	2.39	2.51	2.20	72.73	42.86

BCCS	2.68	2.62	2.57	2.52	60.73	58.55
EDLS	2.98	2.80	2.97	2.73	61.90	56.55
HLTP	3.22	3.11	3.18	3.00	64.46	36.70
HUEN	2.64	2.44	2.58	2.27	63.48	53.26
MNSC	2.93	2.77	2.68	2.36	60.98	35.59
PSAT	3.04	3.00	2.95	3.07	57.78	46.22
SSPS	2.75	2.40	2.70	2.32	62.15	43.69
ADAI	2.81	2.25	2.79	2.21	81.82	58.06

Overall, students who used tutoring services at least five times during the last semester have higher cumulative and term GPAs than students who never attended the Learning Commons. In addition, students who utilize the Learning Commons services had a significantly higher retention rate than students who never used the services.

Student Affairs Initiatives

Related to the Guided Pathways initiative, a primary support to students was also reframed. The roles of completion coaches and advisors were combined into a new position— Student Support Advisor (SSA), reporting to the Vice President of Student Services, with the following broad role description:

> Provides students with a single point of contact to create a seamless pathway for student success from pre-boarding to completion. Works as part of a team providing individual academic, career, financial, and related support to an assigned group of students as they progress through their educational journey. Works collaboratively with faculty mentors by discipline to ensure a smooth guided pathway for students and connects students to needed college resources along the way. The primary focus of this role will be to assist students with the two interior pillars of Guided Pathways: Getting on the Path and Staying on the Path.

As a bridge to the Guided Pathways structure, each of the SSAs focuses on a particular school and develops a special expertise:

School of Art	School of STEM	School of Health Sciences
Rachel Golden	Justin Johnson Monica Brown-Hodkinson	Justin Rahn

School of Humanities & Cultural Studies	School of Public & Human Services	School of Business & Hospitality
Jenny Lewis Rachel Simonds Rosemarie Pastorella	Robin Saxe Dan Eddy	Patti Antanavige Grace Costello

To manage the transition of melding the responsibilities of coaches and advisors, an extensive professional development program has been established with a weekly event occurring every Friday afternoon:

Holistic Student Support Training Schedule (as of 9/13/19)			
Date	Topic	Description	Presenter
9/13/19	Starfish	An introduction into Starfish and how to address flags that are raised by faculty/staff.	Norma Chrisman
9/20/19	Transfer Services	A discussion on what services and procedures to know when working with students who are looking to transfer. Transfer fairs, articulation agreements, tabling events, etc.	Yue Riesbeck & Jim Maio
9/27/19	Starfish	To ensure consistency across all SSAs, training to determine priority of answering flags and where documentation is occurring.	Holistic Student Support Team
10/4/19	Advising Topics	Technology & Tracking – ARGOS, DegreeWorks, Banner, OnBase, SIRS, Blackboard, etc.	Holistic Student Support Team
10/11/19	Financial Aid, Excelsior, & Scholarships	A discussion on financial aid rules and policies, including CNIM (course not in major), the Excelsior Scholarship and scholarships available through the MVCC Foundation.	Mike Pede & Staff, Institutional Advancement
10/18/19	Motivational Interviewing	"Motivational interviewing is a counseling method that helps people resolve ambivalent feelings and insecurities to find the internal motivation they need to	Counseling Staff – Nicole Ollerenshaw

		change their behavior. It is a practical, empathetic, and short-term process that takes into consideration how difficult it is to make life changes."	
10/25/19	Advising Topics	SUNY Silos, SUNY Learning Network, Cross Registration, FERPA, etc.	Dawson McDermott, Tracy Coulson & Registrar Staff
11/1/19	Working Solutions	A presentation about Working Solutions and what programs/scholarships they have to offer students like WIOA (Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act), Trade Act, 599 Letter for unemployment insurance, etc.	Janet Visalli & Kevin Siembab
11/8/19	Case Management	A discussion as to what services and procedures are necessary to case manage our students to completion.	Janet Visalli & Tracy Coulson
11/15/19	Student Veterans/Cultural Sensitivity	A need to know about VA Benefits and awareness training when working with student Veterans.	Jackie Warmuth-Sitrin & Tom Zenon
11/22/19	Advising Topics	Starfish check in, spring 2020 registration, waitlists, placement testing (multiple measures)	Dawson McDermott, Janet Visalli & Placement Testing
11/29/19	*Thanksgiving Break*		
12/6/19	Adult Students & Adult Degree Programs	A presentation on adult learners, andragogy, adult student scholarships (Francis A Wilcox Memorial Scholarship Fund & M & T Bank Part-time Scholarship) and the adult degree cohorts.	Janet Visalli & Patti Antanavige
12/13/19	Residence Life	Residence Hall students, STAR Days, CF100, & possible programming.	Greg Smith
12/20/19	*Flex Date*		
12/27/19	*Holiday Break*		
1/3/20	*Spring Enrollment*	*No training – just back from break.*	
1/10/20	*Flex Date*		
1/17/20	Learning Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder	This training will give us some insights in working with this population of students and OAR in helping these students to succeed in their educational journey.	OAR Staff
1/24/20	Athletic Students	What do SSAs need to know when working with student athletes? What retention efforts are already in place for student athletes?	Brittnee Mexico

1/31/20	Learning Commons	A training to learn what academic supports are in place for students. How are referrals made to tutors, etc.	Ibrahim Rosic
2/7/20	Bridges Out of Poverty	**"**Bridges brings people from all sectors and economic classes together to improve job retention rates, build resources, improve outcomes, and support those who are moving out of poverty. ... to self-sufficiency. Reduce social costs related to crime, poor health, and welfare." How can staff connect students to C3 services?	Evon Ervin & C3 Staff
2/14/20	Starfish	Revisit Topic	Holistic Student Support Team
2/21/20	Advising Topics	Fall 2020 enrollment processes, etc.	Holistic Student Support Team
2/28/20	Strengths Quest	Presentation on strengths and how-to bring students' strengths into the conversations	Jim Maio & Tracy Coulson
3/6/20	Transfer Services	Revisit topic	Holistic Student Support Team
3/10/20 & 3/12/20	NACE Career Coaching Intensive On-Site Workshop	Two-day program to learn effective coaching techniques and gain insight into the latest trends and tactics in career coaching.	NACE
3/20/20	Advising Topics	Withdrawals, rematrics, change of majors, non-matrics, etc.	Dawson McDermott & Janet Visalli
3/27/20	Refugee Students/ESL Students	What do we need to know when working with the refugee student population and ESL classes?	ESL Faculty
4/3/20	*Flex Date*		
4/10/20	Student Activities/Clubs/Student Congress	How can we help to connect students to peer support groups, like clubs, etc.	Student Activities Staff
4/17/20	CCED/Workforce Development/Non-Credit to Credit	What should we know about CCED and their Workforce Development connections?	Franca Armstrong/CCED staff
4/24/20	Assessment	Review POARS	Holistic Student Support Team
5/1/20	*Flex Date*		

This comprehensive professional development initiative represents a major institutional commitment to transform the delivery of student support reflecting the goals of the guided pathways framework.

Part of the SSA's responsibilities is the monitoring or Starfish and the resolution of flags. The following is a summary of Starfish activity:

Total Items Raised		Breakdown of Items by Method		
Item Name	Total Raised	Manually Raised	Survey Raised	System Raised
FLAGS	**7628**	**1403**	**2414**	**3811**
Attendance Concern	1603	467	1136	0
Drop from course	40	40	0	0
Failing Grade at Midterm	135	135	0	0
General Concern	159	159	0	0
In Danger of Failing	351	351	0	0
I Need Help	4	4	0	0
In Need of Tutoring	32	32	0	0
No Show	266	43	223	0
Not Meeting Requirements/Completing Assignments	1188	156	1032	0
Poor Midterm grade	3074	0	0	3074
Poor Midterm Grade for 2 or more courses	737	0	0	737
Preparedness	39	16	23	0
KUDOS	**5656**	**363**	**5293**	**0**
Engaged in Class	5357	64	5293	0
Grades Are Starting to Improve	10	10	0	0
Great Participation	162	162	0	0
Your Extra Efforts Show	127	127	0	0
REFERRALS	**21**	**21**	**0**	**0**
Course Content Tutoring Referral	15	15	0	0
I need a Tutor	1	1	0	0
Writing or Math Tutoring Referral	5	5	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	**13305**	**1787**	**7707**	**3811**

The Starfish data indicate that 'poor midterm grades' is the primary flag raised. Of course, it is uncertain as to whether at this point in the semester intervention can be successful. The second major flag category is 'attendance', which if identified early enables coaches to be proactive. On

average, 88 percent of the flags were cleared. Still, the level of faculty participation in actively

using Starfish as a consistent way to assess student performance remains an open question.

Project Impact

Although the College has moved at high speed toward a Guided Pathways restructuring,

assessing key student success metrics remains an important consideration. A major effort of

the project is the development of gateway course toolkits to improve student achievement. An

overview of performance in gateway courses follows:

Course	Base Line 2014 [%]	2019 [%]	Increase/Decrease [%]
AC115	49	66.6	36
BI141	61	63.6	4
CJ101	73	56.3	-23
DS051	86	74	-14
DS090	80	73.6	-8
EN099	47	50.5	7
EN101	64	56.6	-12
HI101	61	64.1	5
HS101	67	60.8	-9
IS101	64	64.1	0
MA091	43	43.1	0
MA110	54	59.1	9
MA115	58	56	-3
PY101	72	69.5	-3
SO101	73	67	-8

 The results are mixed, with some courses showing modest improvement while other courses

decreased achievement. What is not clear is the extent to which toolkits are actually being

used—these data show student performance for all sections of a particular course irrespective

of toolkit usage. Thus, it is not really possible to report on the effectiveness of the toolkits

without a subsequent analysis of impact including only those sections actually using the toolkits, an investigation that might be undertaken over the next year.

In addition to achievement in gateway courses, persistence from fall to spring in Year Four increased to 79.3%, only slightly below the target of 80. However, for students who specifically participated in PGP initiatives, the persistence rate increased to 83.9%, nearly 4 percentage points above the anticipated results.

Moreover, two key metrics—fall-to-fall retention and the three-year graduation rate were analyzed:

Grant Year Collection Year	Pre-Grant 2014-2015	Year 1 2015-2016	Year 2 2016-2017	Year 3 2017-2018	Year 4 2018-2019
Total Fall Enrollment	4004	3584	3365	3270	3087
Fall-to-Fall Retention %	52.6%	52.5%	54.2%	51.9%	54.1%
Graduation Rate	20.8%	22.6%	24.4%	23.6%	

These measures—retention and graduation—represent the heavy lifting for the project. The fall-to-fall retention rate has remained relatively steady over several years, falling short of the hoped for 60%; however, for students using the Learning Commons, the fall-to-fall retention reached 64%. At the same time, the graduation rate, which is a difficult metric to show improvement, increased to 23.6%, just falling short of the 24% goal; however, it should be noted that in Year 3 that graduation goal was achieved.

In sum, Year Four has been an extraordinary year, with MVCC coalescing around the guided pathways framework, which has provided renewed impetus and direction that can be enhanced through Title III support. Therefore, Year Five, the final year, has the potential to advance the guided pathways structure while consolidating the initiatives undertaken in the previous four years to ensure increasing impact on student success.

Project Management

Mohawk Valley Community College's Title III project is strategically managed and fully integrated into the institutional structure with the President of the College, Randall Van Wagoner, assuming overall leadership responsibility. The Title III Project Director, Lewis Kahler, Vice President for Learning and Academic Affairs, reports directly to the President and supervises the Activity Director, Ibrahim Rosic, as well as the project consultant and former Director, Maryrose Eannace, forming a talented and dedicated leadership team. The Project Director's responsibilities include overall project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives and intended impact. In this capacity Vice President Kahler promulgates Title III policies and procedures and, along with the Activity Director, supervises the Title III staff; establishes and supervises data collection and reports systems; approves all grant expenditures; oversees the evaluation process; and engages the College community's support for the project. Additionally, the Title III Project Director serves as the liaison with the Program Officer, Pearson Owens, providing regular performance reports and organizational updates along with budget amendments developed as necessary.

A *Pathways to Graduation* manual addressing the administration and evaluation of the project has been developed to serve as a guide to ensure effective management. All staff hired for Title III positions are selected and supervised in accordance with established hiring procedures at the college, and position descriptions are on file for all program personnel. Those paid directly by the project or contributing their time as outlined in the application maintain regular time-and-effort tallies to document their efforts in accordance with federal requirements, and all project records are maintained on file by the project leadership.

A Project Team involving all key stakeholders is chaired by the Project Director and meets monthly to ensure the smooth implementation of the project and the achievement of all project objectives. In this capacity, the Team oversees the direction of the Activity, assists with implementation, provides support, makes recommendations, and disseminates information about the project to all constituencies across the institution. A standardized monthly report documents achievement, while a project web page ensures transparency and open communication regarding project implementation. A data warehouse captures baseline measures, monthly reports, activity logs and professional development rosters, as well as quantitative and qualitative information from coaches and support systems to monitor and assess achievement, persistence, and retention to graduation.

All project expenditures are initiated by the appropriate individuals to be processed through the Activity Director, approved by the appropriate College officers, and reviewed by the Project Director prior to submission to the Business office for processing to ensure compliance with the approved budget as well all federal and state regulations. Program records are maintained in the business office under the proper standards of accounting, and the Title III Project Director has direct electronic access to current statements at any time. For the fourth year the budget was $438,431; with carryover from the third year in the amount of $40,739, a total of $479,170 was available to support the project. During the year, with a single budget amendment approved allowing the college to invest endowment funds directly into program development, an estimated $443,428.68 was spent, leaving a balance of approximately $35,741.32 to be carried over into the fifth year of the project. Added to the

budget for the final year, a total of $485,439.32 is available to ensure the effective completion and institutionalization of the project going forward.

The Mohawk Valley Community College management plan reflects the College's intense investment in the success of the project, with everyone, from the President and the Vice President to the members of the Title III team, the faculty and staff dedicated to the effort.

Conclusions, Commendations, and Recommendations

The first year of any Title III project sets the agenda for the duration of the effort; it establishes the infrastructure to strengthen the institution and creates a framework for sustained progress. MVCC seized the opportunity with much accomplished to support the development of the Student Success Portal and the implementation of the Learning Commons along with the development of Gateway Course Customization and the implementation of course enhancements that re-energize learning experiences from the start for all students. However, as with any massive new project, getting started presents challenges as unanticipated issues arise which require attention moving forward. Therefore, at the midpoint of the first year the leadership was encouraged to consider the importance of technological improvements such as a single sign-on as well as the selection of a talented instructional designer/librarian to fuel the development and use of course toolkits.

During the balance of the year as work continued on the two components and the remaining staff came aboard, the Title III Leadership, with the members of the design team and the members of the implementation team, explored the vision and identified the elements that linked the two components of the Activity to create the anticipated synergy and ensure improvements in student achievement, persistence and satisfaction. As a result, the full

complement of resources available were interwoven, and, by the fall semester students were flocking to the Commons to engage with tutors ready to assist with Gateway course assignments, with faculty invested in their success, and with coaches encouraging them to excel, setting the stage for the second year of implementation. To fuel this effort, four additional recommendations addressed the continued development of the coaching role, the potential of instructional toolkits, the development of assessment mechanisms, and the resolution of technology issues.

By the second year of implementation most projects have initiated each component of their projects and hired their teams, but they are still trying to get their footing as they intensify their efforts to change the trajectory for students. In the case of Mohawk Valley, the team was assembled, the initiatives were underway, and they were already beginning to produce results, a fact that augured well for the continued development of the effort as targets become more difficult to achieve. During the course of the year, the *Pathways to Graduation* team began to make adjustments to the effort with the restart of Starfish and the enhancement of the toolkit development process. Therefore, as the year ended the MVCC Title III Team was encouraged to consider the distribution of the coaches' caseloads; engage faculty in the "relaunch" of Starfish; address the sustainability of course customization and toolkits; and create a single sign-on to access all technological systems with a plan for Starfish rollout and training and simplified attendance reporting.

During the third year, every component of the activity was in motion with some components in a design stage, some in pilot and some fully implemented. At this juncture the effort usually moves from design and development to refinement and institutionalization, an

effort that continues to the conclusion of the project in the fifth and final year. And, true to

form, the MVCC project was right on pace, with the Learning Commons, the coaches, and the

early alert moving along through refinement, and the development and refinement of toolkits

continuing apace. Recommendations provided to fuel that effort, addressed the need to

streamline technological systems accessed through a single sign-on and create a masterplan for

the Starfish rollout; promote, manage and intensify usage of toolkits and other instructional

resources; and develop a synergistic relationship between the project and ATD to fuel the

development of the Guided Pathways initiative.

In the fourth year most projects begin to consolidate the gains they have made and

move toward closure. However, at MVCC, the fourth year was perhaps the most exciting of all

with a significant, college-wide investment in Guided Pathways – a tremendous achievement!

Aligned with the project, the Guided Pathways initiative has truly galvanized the institution and

aligned all forces, including the coaches, to ensure a college-wide effort to improve student

success to graduation – a most impressive accomplishment! The following three

recommendations are designed to augment this development and move the project toward a

successful conclusion and institutionalization:

- First, a continuing issue is the implementation and integration of technology. Despite past recommendations, the College still does not have single sign-on, and multiple platforms complicate and impede technology solutions. With only one year left in this grant, the necessary technology improvements are long overdue.

- Second, adding to the technology confusion is the uncertainty around the right platform. For example, what is the future of Starfish? Is Ellucian Advise the correct solution? Where do Argos and DegreeWorks fit; Is a CRM part of the technology suite? How does the student portal need to be refined to promote pathways and direct access to Student Support Advisors? These are key questions which, no doubt, the executive leadership will consider moving forward.

- Finally, the course customization process in terms of the number of courses with toolkits has been completed; however, the question remains about usage and updating. Who is using the toolkits and what impact have they had? Will other toolkits be developed? At the same time, contextualization as part of the Guided Pathways may be a new direction for the toolkits to align with Guided Pathways. A new website established over the past year is a great start to assist faculty in accessing the toolkits and a host of other resources. This site should be expanded as the project continues into the final year to ensure the continued expansion of the iTeach lab on-site and virtually to continue development and ensure that best practices can be shared among colleagues.

Once again, kudos to the MVCC Title III Team! *Pathways to Graduation* has really moved forward significantly in the last year with strong leadership and tremendous energy to produce amazing results! Legions of students are using – and thriving – in the Learning Commons even as faculty refine their toolkits, increase their use of the LMS, and expand their repertoire through the iTeach Lab, the web, and a plethora of professional development programs. During the final year of *Pathways to Graduation* the inherent initiatives will continue to cohere, intensify and increase student satisfaction, achievement, and persistence to graduation. Given the talents of the PGP team, the success of the last four years, and the continuing effort to monitor the impact on the overarching goals of the project, the final year should meet and exceed expectations! Congratulations to the MVCC leadership, the PGP implementation team, and the many faculty and staff contributing to the effort to increase student success!