Transformative Advising: Communicating our Vision

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As a result of the iPASS\(^\text{1}\) convening my team decided that the next best step was to start communicating our plan to the entire College. This was intimidating to us because we are very early in our process of transforming our advising system. We do not have a software package yet and while we have a vision of what the new processes will look like, the details are not all hammered out.

Quite honestly, that communication had not yet started because I was afraid to put the plan “out there” without all the details worked out. We were worried it would be difficult to make someone our champion when we could not tell them how their workload would change or what product they would be using.

We were also concerned that we would not have a large number of second (or third) chances to convince a change averse faculty that this transformation was necessary and beneficial for all involved. Good, correct information is your ally in a communication plan and we just weren’t sure we had enough.

However, making big changes to advising affects every area of the College including Admissions, Registrar, Counseling, and Faculty as well. Because of this, feedback from all stakeholders and end users is critical not only to the selection of the software but also to the fine tuning of the processes. We quickly realized that it is never too early to start asking for input and when we returned we scheduled meetings with Staff Council, Faculty Council, Leadership Cabinet, College Cabinet, and the Deans. So far we have met with Staff Council, Faculty Council, and the Deans of the College.

We made it very clear at the beginning of the presentation that we do not have all the details worked out but all participants were welcome to ask anything and give any feedback from the perspective of their area. The plan has been very well received so far and the feedback has been invaluable. We primarily receive questions about individual workflow and how it will change under the new plan. We also receive questions about the software package. Both of these questions are difficult to answer definitively at this point however, we have promised to return with updates as additional decisions are made.

We are excited to say we now have people asking for us to come and share the new vision with their group and we have certainly gained some champions from this new communication strategy.

Dr. Laurie Fladd began working at Trident Technical College in Fall of 2007 as a Biology Instructor and became Head of the Physical Science Department in January 2010. She currently serves as the Associate Dean of Science and Mathematics and is excited to be the Project Director for the iPASS grant with a focus on STEM advising. Dr. Fladd spent several years as a Biology Instructor in the State University of New York (SUNY) system and holds Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Clemson University.

\(^1\) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success learning initiative. Learn more at [www.AchievingtheDream.org/iPASS](http://www.AchievingtheDream.org/iPASS)