



Dr. Glenda Barron
President
Temple College
2600 South First Street
Temple, TX 76504

Dear Dr. Barron:

We are thrilled to have Temple College as part of the Achieving the Dream (ATD) National Reform Network, and are deeply appreciative of you and your colleagues' continued commitment to student success and equity. After reviewing your 2014 Annual Reflection and receiving input from your ATD coaching team, we offer several observations in this letter about your institution's progress to date. We have arranged the review using the five broad principles that ATD views as key to institutional transformation, which also serve as the section topics for your Principles Assessment Survey. This feedback is offered in support of your institution in its efforts to achieve the student success and equity goals identified by your team.

Reflections on the Five Achieving the Dream Principles

Committed Leadership

We are encouraged by the deepened commitment to student success on behalf of Temple College's leadership team. Developing leadership capacity by growing the Student Success team to include more faculty and staff is especially commendable and will ensure that all institutional leaders prioritize and remain engaged in student success work. Leadership commitment is further exemplified at Temple College by the partnership of the Board of Trustees in prioritizing student success and encouraging student supports and pathways. Continued Board education and discussions of key student success data in regular meetings and retreats are important steps in ensuring that the institution and mission remain focused on student success.

We understand that requests for data are challenging for Institutional Research and Institutional Technology departments. We encourage you to ensure that these requests for data and related reports are not overly taxing and serve a strategic purpose. It might also be helpful to utilize the Student Success Team to align and coordinate all success activity under one umbrella. You may further engage commitment by creating ad hoc strategy teams led by members of the Student Success Team and rounded out with academic and student services faculty and staff to research and address problems.

Use of Evidence to Improve Policies, Programs, and Services

We commend the work of the Institutional Research team given increasing demands for data requests and applaud the continued elevation of data in continuous improvement efforts and routine monitoring of achievement gaps. The new business intelligence system and plans for data professional development and trainings hold promise for making information on student success more broadly accessible across the institution.

Challenges in producing requests for data and the likelihood of taxing capacity and priorities may increase given institutional priorities. Communicating success data to reach multiple audiences can also become a challenge. As you continue to move forward, broaden the business analytics system to enhance IR capacity. You might also consider analyzing and identifying additional channels and forms for communicating and discussing data with faculty and staff.

Broad Engagement

As a co-development partner on the New Mathways Project, Temple College has seamlessly taken advantage of opportunities to engage faculty as partners and leaders in improving instruction for student success. We are excited to see that faculty take ownership of New Mathways and Fast Track programs and attribute student success in developmental coursework and changes in teaching and learning to these interventions. Zero Week and Continuous Orientations engage and challenge faculty and staff in intervention design and evaluation. These interventions connect the institution with students at the onset of the school year and offers professional development which further encourages faculty awareness of student success and advances teaching and learning skills. The recently approved data analytics software package holds promise to more broadly inform and engage all departments of the institution on student success and achievement gaps.

Please consider involving IR in the evaluation of Zero Week and Continuous Orientations to ensure that content is “fresh,” relevant and timely each year. This requires a good evaluation strategy, which will engage the data team and others on the Student Success Team. Additionally, we suggest increasing the type and quality of teaching and learning professional development opportunities during Zero Week to sustain faculty engagement. Consider faculty-led informational sessions on the New Mathways Project to broaden awareness and potential effectiveness of the intervention.

Systemic Institutional Improvement

We appreciate the integration of student success activity into strategic planning, ongoing accreditation efforts and budgeting processes and coordination and alignment of these activities under the Student Success Team. Trustee engagement in strategic planning priorities and encouragement of the incorporation and dissemination of student success data further ensures

that data remains central to discussions and planning for an institution-wide student improvement agenda.

We suggest the college continue to utilize the Student Success Team in the alignment and coordination of all student success activity under one umbrella; promote professional development amongst the Student Success Team to encourage recommendation of changes to policy and practice, as appropriate. We also ask that you consider both scaling and sustainability as discussion points regarding each pilot and grant program.

Equity

We commend leadership and IR on the disaggregation of data to determine which student groups are facing challenges in achievement and additional trends in student success. The creation of an Equity Committee is an important step in working collaboratively to address these challenges and strategize solutions by researching and compiling best practices in equity. We encourage the Committee to engage broadly with faculty and staff from various departments in addition to individuals representative of the student population and service area to disseminate information on achievement gaps and promote the importance of completion for all students.

As you continue this challenging work, we recommend you create a data-informed agenda and work plan for the Equity Committee to address issues of gender, race and poverty that includes annual goals, action items and timelines. An item on the equity agenda might include improvement and evaluation of faculty and staff diversity and strategies for attracting and hiring potential new diverse candidates. This information might be shared with the Board of Trustees to further promote the importance of this priority.

Final Thoughts

First, we would like to recognize and applaud efforts at Temple College to align various student success initiatives into one continuous improvement process. This is particularly remarkable given additional priorities and demands on leadership, staff and faculty. We are enthusiastic about the continued scaling of interventions that address challenges faced in developmental coursework; the New Mathways Project and Fast Track programs show incredible promise in advancing students to college-level courses and completion.

As we reflect on all of your work leading up to and in the past year, we are most impressed by the college's superb leadership team and committed Board of Trustees, all of whom promote the importance of student achievement. Furthermore, their value of innovation inspires action and creative solutions and deepens commitment throughout the institution.

Temple College took bold steps at the outset of their ATD involvement (e.g. ending late registration and creating Zero Week – a time for faculty, staff, and students to prepare for the new academic year). This “week” has grown into a “mini-institute” around student needs and

has created countless opportunities to orient students in new, significant ways and immerse faculty and staff in professional development around teaching and learning. Zero Week is a great example of a strategy that has addressed and successfully responded to student needs better than ever imagined.

We recognize that the distinct environment of each college poses unique challenges and opportunities. In terms of next steps, we would like to suggest that the student success agenda aligns with strategic planning activity. Remain mindful of IR and IT capacity in these efforts. Consider training faculty and staff to use the system in order to broaden data access and analysis.

Also, you might build sustainability through professional development in high impact practices, including active learning, accelerated teaching techniques, and equity. Some of this can be launched during Zero Week but would benefit from being sustained throughout the year.

We appreciate the hard work, time, and resources that your institution devotes to your Achieving the Dream efforts. We encourage you to discuss the feedback in this letter with your Leadership Coach and Data Coach, who are ready to support and guide you moving forward. Please consider reviewing this letter with your ATD Core Team and college at large if you so wish. It may assist you in shaping the direction of your ongoing student success efforts. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and welcome your questions and comments along the way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol A. Lincoln".

Carol A. Lincoln
Senior Vice President