

OMC Formative Survey Results

In June 2015, the PCC Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted a brief formative survey on behalf of the OMC project. Among 44 OMC project participants that were contacted, 24 responded to the survey.

The survey included two open-ended questions: I. Which project activities do you feel were successful and why? II. In your view, briefly indicate the project activities in which there were challenges, and your suggestions for improvement.

I. Project Successes

The project successes mentioned by survey respondents fell into two categories: (1) the collaboration, conversations, and engagement among OMC project participants; and (2) the expansion of dual credit and the products produced from the OMC Project.

(1) Collaboration, Conversations, and Engagement

“The fact that our PLC had representation from the University level, Community College level and High School level was the best part of this group. This was the first time I have been part of group with representation from all three groups. Having personnel from the dual-credit programs was very helpful too. The conversations were rich and provided insight into some of the struggles at each level to create a dual-credit system that truly serves our students.”

“Working with the PCC instructor, she gave me a lot of good ideas and direction. The shared folder from PCC was very helpful”.

“I feel the math PLC did fantastic work. They were fully engaged in the work and brought creative ideas and interest to every meeting. We learned much more about the organizational strengths and barriers in thinking about dual credit and, interestingly, realized that we did not know each other's organizations very well. This produced growth and better dialog”.

“I thought the large group meetings were helpful, especially hearing from state leaders at OEIB and HECC on the policy direction of the state”.

“The local planning meetings brought together university, CC and high school leadership for the first time that I recall and these meetings deepened our understanding of how each institution sees the issues differently. This type of dialog needs to continue because there are still many areas in need of clarification and discussion”.

"The counselor symposium was wonderful, as well as the Washington county family nights we held this year. Both stakeholders need continual support around career and college readiness."

"The Consortium helped begin conversations and how to improve them with K-12, Community Colleges & Universities".

"The Math Professional Learning Community representatives met three times as specified in the grant proposal and offer some recommendations for activities to continue and sustain our Consortium partnership".

"Learning more about the Willamette Promise Consortium through the site visits".

"The management group has enthusiasm for the positive outcomes at all levels. They were open to fiscal suggestions and excellent to work with".

"PLC meetings were insightful and productive".

"We did have challenges, but created great collegial learning communities..."

"The PLC was the most successful aspect of this grant. Collaboration was at its highest level".

"Working together with the high school instructors and learning about their requirements and their local issues was extremely beneficial".

"The PLC meetings that were held later on in the school year were a high success. I was able to strengthen relationships with our local district high school faculty and really enjoyed planning with them and linking our courses. Again, because of the rough roll out of the grant, I think our appearance was hurt in the beginning and folks were already angered. This overshadowed the quality work that was done in later months, once we had straightened things out".

"The second meeting [with] PLC members and PCC department chairs was helpful to understand the challenges PCC has with setting up dual credit classes in high schools".

"I think the information I received via meetings and sessions was helpful".

"We were a very effective group at brainstorming and discussing issues and I marveled at the sheer number of ideas addressed at each meeting, as recorded in our notes".

"I think our most successful activity was the panel discussion we had with department chairs and high school teachers that had implemented or were trying to

implement the college success courses. We helped us understand the each piece and specific challenges associated with that. I think this led to changes in due dates and procedures which I think will be helpful in the future”.

“I’m very proud of the work we did on the counselor symposium. It was a very collaborative effort and let us use our wide range of expertise and our various networks to bring together a fantastic set of presenters and an engaged group of counselors. The feedback I heard from a variety of sources is that we were meeting a huge need by providing this event. The timing was a bit tricky due to it taking place in the forecasting season, but it was still well attended for a first time event”.

(2) Expansion of Dual Credit and Products Produced from OMC Project

“I think the pathways worked well -- in some areas. Depends on the engagement, but for those where work was done, we do have a useful product, and overall we have a better idea of how to do these efficiently”.

“The number of Math classes articulated for Dual Credit mushroomed... I think I can even say they grew ""exponentially"" and remain within the technical, math-based definition of exponential growth. The Math faculty at the high school and college level have been incredibly committed to the Dual Credit process”.

“We have been successful in reaching students who are ""under-represented"" in terms of college enrollment, which is also very exciting”.

“The Math Dual Credit through PCC was very successful. The number of additional math offerings and the support of the math department to assure that high school faculty were closely aligned with PCC demonstrated excellent collaboration”.

“MHCC moved forward with PLCs for our exiting Dual Credit model. Rather than focus on creating a proficiency model or use Teacher of record, we focused on increasing the number of teachers in our partner high schools who are eligible to offer dual credit for courses.”

“We selected two new courses (HD 100 and Math 95) and brought groups of teachers and faculty together quarterly to share best practices on teaching strategies, pedagogy, and assessments”.

“We ... added new classes to the menu of Dual Credit in our region”.

“In terms of a tool kit, I created a website for the East Multnomah County school districts addressing issues related to post-secondary access. To be sure I was creating something that would be useful for counselors, parents, and students. I solicited feedback from the counselors. Their insights and responses helped shape the focus. Each month had a different emphasis (February-June) and I used the

space to highlight resources I had come across through the networking and research I was doing”.

“Two middle schools were particularly interested in receiving assistance in building college-going culture. I was happy to be a part of getting the counselors and other identified staff resources on financial aid, choosing the right college, college visitations, career days, and more. This spring they were reaching out to me as a resource on a variety of topics, in addition to what I was sending to them in support of previously expressed needs/wants”.

“MHCC had wanted to hold some sort of preview day (similar to those held by PCC) and this grant provided them the support to try it out. It was a solid event for high school students and again feedback was very positive”.

“PCC Cascade was willing to host a middle school event near the end of the year. There were two middle schools that wanted to come, but in the end only one did (due to scheduling conflicts for the other). About 90 students and 4 teachers participated. The coordinating instructor told us it was the best college visitation the students had attended all year”.

II. Project Challenges

Challenges mentioned by survey respondents included (1) communication issues; (2) issues regarding the scope, participation commitment, and time frame of project; (3) curriculum and policy disagreements; (4) confusion regarding roles and responsibilities; and (5) budget and funding issues.

(1) Communication Issues

“The biggest challenge was vertical communication. Our PLC had great conversations, but we knew nothing [of] the other PLC conversations”.

“We had no conversations with the representatives that were working at the policy level, so we had little confidence that our voice would be heard”.

“I felt isolated from the activities of the other PLCs and other aspects of the project. The web support was a little hard to navigate which made following the work of the rest of the project difficult”.

“Better communication [was needed]. Planning things out further in advance and making sure everyone involved knows the dates and times”.

“It was decided early on that MHCC and PCC would have their own Math and College Success Professional Learning Communities, so we weren't able to learn much from each other”.

"The biggest challenge was getting all of the participants in the grant to work collaboratively and agree upon completing the goals of the grant".

"Coordination of grant activities between the two community colleges and several regions was VERY challenging".

"I would suggest we work collaboratively in the future, but with each region responsible and accountable unto themselves. I am sure from the PCC perspective this was very challenging as well".

"I would also work harder to have some type of monthly communication update to all parties. Even some type of newsletter that is distributed to ALL stakeholders.... from Superintendents/President all the way to the classroom instructors/faculty".

"I am ... concerned that when the administrators stopped by to see how things were going, they left with an inaccurate view of what the committee cared about. Staying for 30 minutes gave them ideas of random individuals' topics or brainstorm ideas. Several days after a meeting I hear someone say what the math folks were planning, and it was a topic that only existed in conversation for those few minutes".

"Collaborative planning would ensure time and energy for all that we would hope to accomplish. There would be more local control as to what resources are available for support, which would help eliminate confusion and address expectations".

(2) Issues Regarding Scope, Participation Commitment, and Time Frame of Project

"I wasn't able to attend several meetings because I had too much to get done at my school. I don't know how this could be improved".

"Participation in the PLC from all partner institutions [was an issue]".

"An... issue was that the PLC met only three times. I think we accomplished a lot in that timeframe, but more could be done as individuals and institutions grew in their understanding of each other's issues".

"For the PLCs, some areas were easier than others to get faculty participation in -- and then even after agreeing to participate, some did not show up to the events".

"Trying to coordinate meetings for all PLC members [was an issue] - calendar these out the first meeting and stick to the dates agreed upon".

"We are concerned that many of the policy recommendations that were made may never be seen by policy makers on campuses or at the state level, especially with the recent demise of the OEIB. We are not sure how the policy issues will be addressed".

"It was difficult to coordinate multi-agency, multi-county activities within the given one year timeframe; I think a multi-year grant would have been helpful".

"Not enough time to meet grant outcomes. The College Success Professional Learning Community (K-12 partners, PCC/PSU) only met twice rather than three times".

"Changes from the funder about the number of reports and meetings that weren't identified in the initial grant proposal".

"I think a longer lead time for developing the program architecture, writing the grant and obtaining faculty buy in would be a potential solution. We had top down support, but needed additional time and resources to develop bottom up support".

"My impression was that the OMC grant was very ambitious and tried to address a variety of issues impacting college access, of which there are many. Due to the broad reach of the grant (work across two counties with nine school districts), it seemed to be hard to get the traction and momentum going that we all had hoped for. A smaller more organic approach may have created more impact".

(3) Curriculum and Policy Disagreements

"The Math PLC experienced a major challenge in that instructors from one of the participating higher education institutions were not willing to participate in the math PLC. Their reason, as I understand it, was a professional disagreement with the topic of the PLC, i.e., exploring the strengths and weakness, opportunities and challenges of dual credit programs and other partnerships between high schools and higher education".

"For MTH 95, there were problems ... with the more generous *Instructor Qualifications* that not all teachers could meet those [qualifications], setting up uneven access to the PCC credit within a building or district".

"We ... faced an equity issue within the school buildings and districts themselves. Not every section taught within a building, and certainly within a district, was eligible to articulate Dual Credit".

"In the absence of a true "Eastern Promise" model, the PLCs suffered from a lack of direction. If we reconstituted them as research specific bodies (such as investigating any Open Educational Resources that would be appropriate for our courses), I feel they would be more efficient".

"Alignment of MTH95 was the most difficult to attempt. This was due to the wide variation and lack of planning at the high school level".

"A major challenge is to have complete alignment between the high school Algebra 2 course and our math 95 course. As a result of not using the same book, not having the same access or use of technology and having slightly different student learning outcomes, it remains difficult to have buy-in to accept the high school math courses for MHCC credit. I suggest that we accept the Algebra 2, high school course for what it is and allow students with A or B grades in that subject to register for any college level math course without taking a math placement test. If no college level math is required for an MHCC degree or certificate then allow any student with a C or higher high school grade in Algebra I or Geometry to have no further math requirements at the college".

"We struggled mainly over teacher credentials and how to ensure college level quality in a big school setting. Perhaps a certification to teach, along with regular support and coordination led by a point person in each building could help."

"The major challenge was trying to understand the multiple ways that college success courses were being offered to high school students. Many schools are using AVID. Some schools are using courses that have been accepted for college credit at PCC. The level of inconsistency in the programs and trying to find ways that they overlapped so that we could work towards a seamless process was extremely challenging".

"I am very concerned that, after all of the effort, nothing will happen or change".

(4) Confusion Regarding Roles and Responsibilities

"We needed to identify *Instructors of Record* who would work with faculty in the MTH 111 course. Many of our faculty were very concerned about whether this model would provide quality Dual Credit, and about the time and effort it would take to ensure that".

"If I had to do it over again, I would involve not just the high level district administrators, but also the building administration and certainly the faculty who would be participating. This is true of the PCC side as well; our faculty "on the ground" were not aware of the project until the funding was in hand and the college was committed".

"Getting the grant off the ground was a huge challenge and created a lot of confusion initially. Because several members of our team didn't participate in the writing of the grant, it was tough to catch up mid-stream. I also think adequate time to select faculty for our Math/College Success PLC was a huge challenge. My suggestion for

this moving forward would be to reach out to faculty before summer term - Many are non-service during the summer months and therefore, are unable to participate”.

“As far as the issue of grant management and coordination, I would ask for a centralized person who could manage this work - Also, affiliation is important. I wouldn't have an MHCC or PCC lead as information is then in silos and becomes inconsistent. Perhaps, PSU or MESD? An example of this confusion was - We did not have a central email list for this grant. Sometimes I received emails, sometimes I didn't, depending on who was sending it”.

“Another frustrating occurrence, which was unpreventable, was changes in personnel as points of contact in the schools. Sometimes with those changes participation with what we were doing seemed to be low on the priority list, as the vision wasn't always passed on to the new person”.

“I would like to include school building personnel from the beginning of the year and use what I've learned about the districts I've served to better support them and their building specific needs (i.e. Parkrose does not have a dedicated College and/or Career Center, and they appreciate more hands on support in this area).”

(5) Budget and Funding Issues

“The breakout of the budget into various components was challenging. Also, the detail level of the leveraged funding is difficult to track to that level. PCC had lessons learned, as we changed the budget, from the partner colleges to pay all teacher stipends, instead of PCC, due to PERS requirements. It was challenging, but we have an excellent process moving forward”.

“The timing of the grant was challenging. Once we were notified of our funding, our secondary school partners had already solidified their 2014-15 teaching assignments, and one comprehensive high school simply couldn't make it work and ultimately did not participate in the program”.

“The issues surrounding the funding of certain aspects of the grant made full participation difficult. I don't know where all of the issues came from, but for many of the east county participating districts, there was frustration surrounding things like the funding of the Career Choices book (not something they were prepared to fund themselves once the school year was already up and running) and issues surrounding transportation costs. There were changes made between what the original grant proposal contained for college visitation costs, etc. and what was actually funded. Districts were not prepared to fund trips, particularly from the building level. This frustration may have impacted our ability to make larger strides this year. Occasionally time frames were too short to garner full participation (which again could/would have likely been hampered by availability of funds). For

example the Oregon Public Universities event hosted at PSU was a great one, but Multnomah County schools didn't participate because they did not have enough time to arrange buses and/or pay for them".