MINUTES

Trustees Present: Lili Silva (Chair); Tobey Choate; Sandy Lish; Mikael Pyrtel; Rodolpho Sanz; Wendy Vincent

Staff Members Present: David Podell, President; Courtney Jackson, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost; Christopher La Barbera, Assistant Provost; Lynne Davis, Dean of Health Sciences; Nina Keery, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences; Susan Maggioni, Dean of Business and Professional Studies; Chitra Jaydekar, Dean of STEM; Jeremy Solomon, Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Marketing, and Communications; Richard Williams, Associate Dean for Student Success and Strategic Initiatives; Elizabeth Blumberg, Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students; Sarah Salerno, Director of Academic Advising, Coaching, and Transfer; Sean Fortney, Assistant Director for Academic Advising, Coaching, and Transfer; Tamika Williams, Academic and Transfer Counselor; Julie Schleicher, Coordinator of Orientation and Student Engagement; Sunny Chaiyaruk, Student Orientation Leader; Micaela Burns, Student Orientation Leader; Josh Cheney, Associate Dean of Students

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Chair Silva declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order. Chair Silva motioned to approve the November 15, 2022 minutes and was seconded by Trustees Lish and Pyrtel.

The motion to approve and accept the minutes passed with the following roll call vote: Trustee Choate – ABSTAIN; Trustee Lish – YES; Trustee Pyrtel – YES; Trustee Sanz – ABSENT; Trustee Vincent – YES; Trustee Silva – YES.

SOARING TO STUDENT SUCCESS

Provost Courtney Jackson reminded the Trustees that this year’s agenda follows the lifecycle of a student, and today’s discussion would center on how MassBay supports students as they are joining the college, including student orientation and the case management/advising model. Both fall under Student Development and the leadership of Dr. Elizabeth Blumberg. Dr. Jackson introduced Julie Schleicher, Coordinator of Orientation and Student Engagement.
SOAR stands for Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration. The main purpose of Orientation/SOAR is to welcome students to MassBay by making sure they have all of the information they need, leading them through steps of enrollment, exposing them to resources, engaging them, facilitating a connection, and helping them find their goals and purpose. These, in turn, put them in a better position to succeed and navigate the college process.

The goals and objectives of orientation are to help students in their transition to MassBay, simplify the enrollment process, have a one-stop event for everything students need, and promote campus community. SOAR began in 2011. During the first few years, only a small portion of students would attend orientation. After determining that students who attended orientation were more likely to be retained than those who do not, attendance became mandatory in 2017. It had been a 5 hour in-person event, but shifted to an online self-driven course in 2020 during the pandemic. SOAR returned to an in-person format last summer. The virtual option remains, which is especially advantageous for international students.

In 2022, the position of Orientation Leaders was expanded to help students through the entire enrollment process, and SOAR moved to a one-on-one advising and registration model instead of in groups. Julie introduced Student Orientation Leaders Sunny Chaiyaruk and Micaela Burns, who led the group in an ice breaker activity like one that would take place on a MassBay orientation. Julie then walked the Trustees through the orientation day schedule.

Julie introduced Josh Cheney, Associate Dean of Students, who talked about the family portion of orientation. MassBay has made efforts to strengthen relationships with students’ families in addition to the students, as family members are often a key component to student success. There’s an online, self-paced offering, a virtual drop-in hour during summer and winter breaks, and on-campus Family SOARs in the winter and summer.

The desired outcomes of SOAR for students are to foster a sense of belonging and connection to MassBay, provide knowledge of MassBay resources and services, complete the registration process with a schedule that works for them, create a desire to come to campus, and build a partnership with their academic advisor.

Julie clarified for Trustee Lish that orientation is mandatory for students, but at the same time, students are not forced to attend. She also responded to Trustee Choate that the Orientation Team’s relationship with students more or less ends once they start classes, but that could change in the future.

**RELATIONSHIPS MATTER: CASE MANAGEMENT AT MASSBAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Courtney Jackson introduced Sarah Salerno, Director of Academic Advising, Coaching, and Transfer to discuss academic advising and case management and the relationships built between advisors and students. Sarah introduced Sean Fortney, Assistant Director for Academic Advising, Coaching, and Transfer to begin the presentation on what academic advising and case management are and why they’re important, and what had been done previously with the drop-in model.
Sean stressed the importance of Student Engagement and how it ties to ideal outcomes of students staying at the college and being successful. The Advising program at MassBay is a structured environment to help students make more complicated decisions about self-improvement and help students to help themselves.

The shift from drop-in advising to the case management model transitions from what students want in that moment to what students need to develop and be successful. Advising is required rather than only being on demand. It is preemptive instead of reactionary. Advisors are assigned a group of students to focus on building relationships. It creates a more meaningful experience for students and a better experience for staff. The mechanics of case management consist of being non-judgmental, on-going contact, targeted outreach, intentional referrals, bridging gaps, individualized plans, and early intervention.

Prior to adopting the case management model, students weren’t being contacted by an assigned advisor until week 5 of the semester, which was not a student-ready system. There was no consistency or continuity of service, leading to frustration and burn out. After implementing gradual changes, the college received a SUCCESS grant, which provided 5 new success coach academic advisors, leading to the case management model to be implemented in Fall of 2021.

Since implementing case management, COMPASS meetings are being completed at higher rates, drop-in advising wait times have significantly decreased, students are making more repeat appointments with their assigned advisors, the quality of advising has increased, and partnerships between departments has been strengthened. Students who meet with advisers more frequently have been shown to have higher GPAs.

Sarah Salerno introduced Tamika Williams, an Academic and Transfer Counselor, who spoke first-hand about her experience using the case management model and reiterated the importance of relationship-building and forming connections with students. The Trustees then watched a video with student testimonials of how their relationships with their advisors have impacted them.

Trustee Silva asked about how Faculty Advisors are assigned and what training they receive, if any. Sarah responded that full-time faculty are assigned 18 advisees within their academic purview per their contract, and trainings are offered to faculty often. One-on-one training with Sarah seems to be the most effective as well as support from their faculty chairs. An annual advisor day is in the process of being created.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Silva proposed the motion to adjourn the meeting. It was moved by Trustee Pyrtel and seconded by Trustee Choate. The motion was approved, and the meeting adjourned after the following roll call vote: Trustee Choate – YES; Trustee Pyrtel – YES; Trustee Sanz – YES; Trustee Vincent – YES; Chair Silva – YES.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 18, 2023.