



November 1, 2019

Dear Dr. Morrison,

Thank you for the opportunity to visit South Arkansas University Tech on October 28th-29th. It was great to be back on your campus and to spend time with your Dream team again. I am grateful for the hospitality and the opportunity to work with your dedicated staff. This second trip focused on building momentum, debriefing the process mapping experience, establishing action plan goals and developing an evaluation plan. We had very engaged dialogue and your team has accomplished a great deal so far. A summary and reflections are included below.

Work Completed to Date

Beginning with the HSS Institute, the team has focused on several initiatives:

- Strengthening communication with the college community
- Creating a student intake form
- Redesigning Soar and Rocket Launch
- Establishing relationships with community resources

Since the last on campus visit, the SAUT core team has presented at convocation and created student case studies to educate faculty and staff. They also established a team name and logo to brand their efforts for communication. In addition, an intake form was launched, orientation was split into two distinct sessions, and these new events were piloted.

Process Mapping

A primary goal of this visit was to debrief the processing map created last summer by the core team. Collectively, we have been working to better understand SAUT student onboarding and how we can help students to connect to resources more proactively. The facilitated event mapped the timeline from admission application to the first day of school and is a pivotal first step to better understanding how students navigate your systems and processes. The visit last week allowed the Dream team to focus on specific touchpoints, communications, and opportunities for improvement. After several hours of discussion, the team voted on the highest priorities for their action planning work moving forward.

Action Planning

Three primary goals were established during the visit: Revising the intake survey, Soar, and Rocket Launch. The intake survey is designed to gather information from students prior to their first semester. This data can be used to identify student challenges and connect students to resources that will help them stay in college. After implementing for the first time this fall, the team would like to revise some of the questions, make the survey faster to complete and do a better job clarifying expectations for campus staff working with referrals from the survey.

The orientation process has now been split into two distinct experiences for students. Soar is the first component and focuses on student enrollment, payment, and introduction to email/technology for students. The team determined that there are opportunities around this event as well. First, a decision to make this experience mandatory was discussed and the complications around timing of housing commitments was brought to light. The team wants to ensure that all new program students attend Soar, enroll in courses, take the intake survey, and understand options for payment.

The second part of the orientation is Rocket Launch which occurs closer to the start of the semester. The team would like to make this a mandatory experience for students where just-in-time information could be shared and students could be connected to resources based on their intake survey from Soar. A big opportunity highlighted in the visit was the lack of faculty engagement during Rocket Launch. This time could be used to orient students to their academic programs and to start building relationships with faculty before the first day of school. Done well, students will be more prepared for learning on the first day of class.

Evaluation Plan Formation

An integral part of the Holistic Student Support framework is to measure the impact of our transformation work. A presentation on evaluation and measurement was provided and we began working with the team on creating key milestones with outcomes, activity steps, and timelines. This work will need to be continued by the team to finalize their action plan for December of 2019. I will be sending them copies of our visit action/evaluation planning as well as additional tools to aid them in this effort.

In summary, SAUT is on the front end of significant change work. By prioritizing this work with the student at the center, SAUT will not only transform student lives, but also the lives of their families and their community. I have so enjoyed working with your team and it is our intention that our facilitation is helping them build capacity and skills to drive change in the future. As I am sure you know, this work takes a great amount of effort, time, communication, and passion.

I am convinced your team has the drive to keep the momentum going. Thank you again for your support and hospitality.

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With kind regards,

John Grant

