

Student Equity & Access Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 7, 2022

Quorum?	<p>Quorum met.</p> <p>– Reminder of what meets quorum. Twelve voting members. Eleven people are at this meeting. Excluding the two VPs, this meets quorum. (Seven faculty, seven classified. Eight or more attendees meets quorum.)</p>
Public Comments	<p>No public comments.</p>
Approval of Minutes	<p>Minutes for March and April approved. November’s minutes are available for review in the folder.</p>
Student Equity Plan (SEP)	<p>The SEP has gone through all processes. The final version is in the committee’s folder.</p> <p>The Senate has a great discussion on the budget, its transparency, and the future directions of the SEA funding. Faculty are strongly interested in seeing a greater transparency.</p> <p>The SEP was kept on the agenda to discuss rollout plans for the Spring.</p>
Budget	<p>Cathy will come to one of the Equity meetings, possibly in January. She will talk about the ways Ventura College shares the budget to help the committee better understand it. The budgets are posted in several places and accessible for people to review, yet there are continuing concerns about a lack of transparency.</p> <p>How can the budgets be made more transparent? What needs to be done in terms of sharing information? There seems to be some confusion as to what transparency means. For many, they have trouble understanding the reports. There have been some conversations about creating reports in a preferred format versus the Banner format to make it more understandable.</p> <p>Within the SEA budget there are some large percentages allocated to certain areas. What are the things within those areas? What are the services? What is the budget specifically paying for? How do the allocation of funds fit into the plans?</p> <p>For instance, Pirates Cove is in the SEA budget. Do we still have Pirates Cove? (Editor’s Note: This was addressed in the previous meeting. The Pirates Cove was allocated funding in a previous fiscal year, but, since it doesn’t exist anymore, the funds were reallocated to another program. The report presented by Damien showed three fiscal years’ funding, which included a year when the Cove still existed.)</p>

What does a transparent budget look like? What's being funded and is there an agreement about it? Or, is it that the budget is being transparently communicated but people disagree about the allocations?

For clarification, one big area (program) of the SEA budget, General Institutional Support, is actually a budget savings for the following year. These funds are "held" for all the salaries coming out of the grant. Cathy can explain this further.

There appear to be two issues regarding the budget:

- Is the budget transparently showing where everything is going? Is it being communicated? Is it clear to everyone? - If it's not clear, then this needs to be changed.
- Is there an issue with what's being communicated? If it's not transparency, what is it? How can people be fully informed, whether it's agreed to or not?

The format of the budgets is difficult to understand. For some, the issue is not seeing a direct link between the budget reports and how the funds are connected to equity activities.

Should something be funded? This is different than an issue with transparency. This may be more an issue with the lack of understanding/participation in the process for allocating funds. It seems there is no obvious transition from when funds are not allocated to the decision has already been made.

How are things decided? This part feels mysterious and it seems like the committee doesn't have the chance to provide timely, meaningful, input. This committee has not been involved in this process before, but maybe this is something to look at. If the committee makes recommendations about equity efforts, there is a lack of transparency as to why or how some things get funded and others do not. It is not clear how priorities are set with regards to the use of funds.

How does the budget tie to the Equity Plan? Is the budget really doing what the Plan says needs to be done? The budget should reflect what is in it. What is happening in the budget that will address achievement gaps within a specific student population? Is everything tied to closing gaps? Is the money being used as a remedy or for improvement of equity or is it going somewhere else? It seems that in the past, the budget has been going other places that have not been addressed in the Plan.

Does this speak to a transparency issue or to what the funds are being used for? Perhaps both.

Remember that the SEA funds are for Student Equity *and Achievement*. Some things will be for achievement from when 3SP merged. These can be working towards student success that are not necessarily focused on equity things.

The transparency definition is not transparent. Clarity is needed to show:

- How the budget ties to the Plan.
- What each line item means. (For instance, what does the holdover mean?)
- What the decision-making process is.
- Where the SEA committee has the opportunity to make budget recommendations.

What more is needed, beyond just posting the reports, to operationalize transparency? What other format will more effectively communicate?

When the posted budgets are compared to the Plan, it can't be matched up. There is no understandable link. There is nothing that shows how allocated salaries for people will close the gaps. An obvious logical connection should exist between the budget and the Plan.

This is something that would be addressed when the group starts working on the rollout of the Equity Plan. When informing the campus of what the Plan is, people can be made aware of their place within it.

In the Plan, there are overarching goals that have no associated budget amounts, especially in Year One. Since these are more general in nature, the funds can come from any budget (Guided Pathways, Outreach, general funds, lottery . . .) Because this is not delineated in the Plan, it will make things murkier going forward. This could perpetuate the misunderstanding (or perceived lack of transparency) moving forward. It would be beneficial as the group starts the rollout to educate the campus community.

As the committee comes up with the action steps, it can advocate for the budget allocations, regardless of the source. In future years, this should develop a clearer, more obvious, tie between funds and the Plan.

So – for clarity – If a recommendation was made and was not accepted by the Exec Team (or at the President's level), but there was a process and it wasn't implemented. Would we then be in a situation where there was transparency, though it was a disappointment? Or would we consider that not transparent? What should we do with a situation like that? If there is not an agreement on the recommendations, or if they are tweaked, how will it be interpreted? Or, if the funding comes from a source other than the SEA funds, will that cause concern?

If there understanding of the budget-making process increased, these questions could be discussed. If the steps of the process are covered, it would be easier to make the connections. Everyone would expect those connections to be made as a standard practice. There would still be an opportunity to make connections between the things we're doing and things in the Plan. If there's disagreement about the outcome, it could be justified. The results wouldn't matter if a process was followed.

The SEA committee's responsibility is to make recommendations regarding how to close equity gaps. It is not to provide budget oversight. It does not make decisions or recommendations for how funding is designated, spent, reported. However, if the budget and the Plan are aligned, there'd be less conversation about money and more about equity actions.

The committee doesn't seem to be asking for budget oversight. They want to make recommendations on activities and to see a line to the funding source. If there was a process for recommendations, including closing the loop, the group may be more comfortable.

It seems the reason other funds are being used is because SEA funds are already locked in. Is this what's going on? Can't counseling budgets be moved to another budget so that SEA funds can be focused on the Equity Plan?

There is a Student Equity Plan and there is SEA (Student Equity and Achievement) funding. The SEA funds are a conglomerate of Equity, 3SP, and Basic Skills which the college still needs to continue to fulfill. The Equity Plan is campus-wide. The SEA funds involve all of these other measures.

Counseling was funded with 3SP, but it doesn't exist anymore. The 3SP combined with Equity and the budget name changed. The items stayed where they were, but it's now called Student Equity and Achievement (SEA). However, the college is still responsible for 3SP things. A huge part of the Equity Plan is to continue to fulfill those matriculation steps.

Next year's budget will be formulated in March. There is time for this group to make recommendations.

The question of how the counselors are funded could be addressed. If the campus wants to institutionalize the positions, their funding source could be switched to come from general funds thus freeing up the SEA funds for other things. Justification would need to be provided. If a position is not contributing to closing the equity gap, it would need to be explained.

There is a greater understanding of what transparency means to the group. There is a common understanding that the group is a recommending body. It also wants the ability to draw straight lines from budget items to Plan activities.

<p>Adding A Workgroup and Additional Meetings</p>	<p>Can the group meet more often in early Spring to focus on budget recommendations and the processes? This would help the group avoid getting behind or having to do extra work.</p> <p>There isn't a process yet for recommendations. The group needs to figure out how it wants to do this. It may be something like the out-of-cycle program review requests.</p> <p>So what does the committee want to do? Can we have a meeting each month for the rollout and a separate meeting that addresses the budget process?</p> <p>A work order was put in to Marketing for info graphics for the rollout. This is something that could be for a workgroup.</p> <p>Maybe there should be a "resource" recommendation group, because it's beyond the word budget. This would get the group away from being perceived as trying to manage the budget and more about recommending resources that will close the equity gaps and support achievement.</p> <p>Splitting out the meetings would allow the group to focus on developing opportunities and strategies for the Equity Plan. This is especially needed for Year One which is an exploratory year. It is a time for information-gathering and resource building.</p> <p>There is a strong desire or need to work out the resource recommendation process. The President certainly has an interest in having a process in which recommendations come from the SEA group. She had previously suggested using something like reviewing all program review initiatives for equity-related requests. However, there hasn't been clear guidance for how the programs can include equity efforts in their reviews.</p> <p>Perhaps the equity group could make recommendations to the CPC. Or recommendations could be made to Institutional Effectiveness to incorporate questions related to the SEP in next Fall's program review process. This would give the group an opportunity to do some type of resource ranking.</p> <p>Committee members were okay with the idea of a resource recommendation process being presented to the Exec Team for their input. Either the SEA committee could be invited to an Exec meeting, or Kim could be invited to a SEA meeting. Jennifer will add it to Exec agenda and it will come up on the 12<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Using a more formal process would be more directive and specific. The example of the out-of-cycle program review requests was mentioned again. It has a form to fill out with some justification, and it requires a response within 30-days.</p> <p>There seems to be an agreement about working on rolling out the new Plan.</p>
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	<p>The group meets on the Fourth week. The additional meetings will be on the Second week and these will focus on the recommendations and rollouts.</p> <p>A link was provided for the workgroup to look at the out-of-cycle process for the first meeting:  <a href="https://www.venturacollege.edu/college-information/program-review/out-cycle-resource-request-process">https://www.venturacollege.edu/college-information/program-review/out-cycle-resource-request-process</a>  If the group wants to look at this as a potential model, the website has useful information and examples.</p>
Rollout	<p>Preliminary work can be started in the Spring. While there is an opportunity to make budget recommendations, the committee is responsible for moving the equity needle. Part of really understanding the Plan and getting the entire campus buy-in is to educate them. This will be really important in the Spring semester. The campus needs to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the equity plan?</li> <li>• What are our equity initiatives?</li> <li>• How do they tie into our HSI initiative?</li> <li>• How does it tie into athletics?</li> <li>• How does it tie into specialized programs?</li> </ul> <p>The SEP will be explained to the campus. If people understand what their part in the Plan is, they can incorporate this into their Fall activities. The ASVC students are eager to get started.</p> <p>The group needs to look at how to do outreach and getting people to participate.</p>
Kudos	A big thank you goes to all the writers and contributors to the writing of the Plan.
Next Meetings 2:00 – 3:30	<p>January 11 – SEA Resource &amp; Request Workgroup – Quorum is not needed but attendance/input is encouraged  Agenda Item – Feedback from Exec Team on the Resource Request Process  Agenda Item – What will the rollout look like? How will people be invited in?</p> <p>January 25 – Regular committee meeting</p> <p>February 1 – SEA Resource &amp; Request Workgroup</p>