



## **“Diversity Summit” Summary February 2017-June 2018**

The National CTC led a 17-month pilot program that delivered recruiting/retaining strategies for underserved populations to community colleges in the CCN community and facilitated the development of specific, 12-month diversity “action plans” to be funded by the CTC.

### February 2017 Workshop

Ten schools from seven states attended a two-day “Diversity Summit” event (February 2017). Each school targeted a specific underserved population. By the end of the project in June 2018, two schools had dropped out, leaving just eight. Each school sent a team of three members – a counselor, a faculty member, and an administrator.

At the February 2017 “Diversity Summit” event, seven Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) addressed the group.

Serita Acker, Clemson University

Mercedes Adams, NetApp – Director, Academic Alliance; Director, the Guiding Coalition

Andres Diaz, Puerto Rico Photonics Institute – Academic Coordinator

Matt Glover, Le-Vel – CTO (and CTC BILT chair)

Laura Nicholas, IBM – communications consultant

Beth Quinn, National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) – social scientist

Pam Silvers, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College – instructor

This February 2017 workshop required that the teams develop a customized action plan with one-on-one SME assistance. These action plans (which identified specific diversity strategies and measureable goals) were attached to contract services agreements and also included “baseline numbers” of Fall 2016 enrollment, which would be used for later comparison to 2017 enrollment to help better measure action plan success.

The goal was for each “Diversity Summit” team to launch the diversity strategies from its action plan, with the support of limited CTC funding, and collect evidence (enrollment reports, retention reports) that would be compelling enough to convince their respective administrations to fund the strategies on an ongoing basis with institutional money.

Post-event survey responses suggest the February 2017 “Diversity Summit” was successful:

“The content of the Diversity Summit was relevant to what we want to accomplish at our institution.”  
“I feel equipped to take action on recruiting/retaining the population we've targeted in our action plan.”  
>>100% (out of 29 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed

“Knowledge of best practices for recruiting and retaining under-served population.”  
>>72% (out of 29 respondents) self-reported an increase in at least one level of expertise in this area (i.e. beginner to intermediate, intermediate to advanced)

All of the SME presentations were recorded and disseminated via the CTC’s YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/mobileCTC>).

Slides were disseminated here: [http://diversitysummit2017.nationalctcwiki.org/handouts\\_and\\_resources](http://diversitysummit2017.nationalctcwiki.org/handouts_and_resources)

Action plan strategies included:

\* High school outreach

\* “In reach” to current college students (who may not have gotten into the program of their first choice)

- \* Creating new internal systems and processes to better streamline data and support students
- \* Student mentor programs to encourage persistence
- \* Updating and revising marketing materials to focus on inclusion
- \* Faculty training and best practice sharing on inclusion
- \* Adding a female role model co-instructor to an entry-level class to boost retention

#### Quarterly cohort web meetings

Following the February 2017 workshop, the “Diversity Summit” teams met quarterly via web meetings for program updates and team sharing.

- \* March 21, 2017 – also featured a presentation on messaging from SME Laura Nicholas
- \* June 20, 2017
- \* September 22, 2017 – also asked the team to look ahead to what’s still left to complete
- \* January 10, 2018
- \* April 6, 2018

In addition to these web meetings, CTC staff members were assigned “Diversity Summit” teams and conducted regular (if not monthly) “check in” phone calls to monitor the progress of action plan goals. These short calls helped CTC better understand each school’s unique needs and challenges as well as create a stronger sense of accountability among the teams.

#### Fall 2017 enrollment report

The “Diversity Summit” teams were asked to submit a snapshot of their Fall 2017 enrollment numbers to compare with Fall 2016 and to provide an overview of whether their efforts to date had been successful.

Six teams provided data. Two had already met their “Diversity Summit” action plan goal:

School	Fall 2017 enrollment
College B	“No real change”
College C	Enrollment across the school was way down – female makeup dropped from 34.5% to 21%
College E	Met their goal. Wanted to boost female enrollment from 9 of 28 (32%) to 12 of 31 (39%). They ended up 16 out of 33 (48%).
College G	Added only one new African-American female student.
College H	Met their goal. Boosted female enrollment by 10 from 112 to 122, which was their plan.
College I	While they added six females, the ratio is about the same – 16.5% in Fall 2016 and 16.7% in Fall 2017.

>>Both College B and College D had trouble implementing their planned high school outreach strategy and by the end of Fall 2017 ultimately decided to change strategies and focus on retaining the students they had rather than recruiting new students.

#### Deadline Extension

In January 2018, the CTC offered “Diversity Summit” teams the chance to extend the program period. Rather than end on February 28, 2018 as originally planned, teams could keep working and spending unused money from their original approved budget through June 30, 2018. The ramp-up following the February 2017 workshop took longer than anticipated and many strategies and activities could not be implemented before the Spring 2017 term ended as planned.

School	Status
College A	Ended as planned – February 2018
College B	Ended as planned – February 2018
College C	Extended through June 2018
College D	Ended as planned – February 2018

College E	Extended through June 2018
College F	Extended through June 2018 (but ultimately dropped out of the program)
College G	Ended as planned – February 2018
College H	Extended through June 2018
College I	Extended through June 2018

Note that College J (the tenth team) dropped out of the program prior to Fall 2017.

July 2018 HITEC conference – Two members of the “Diversity Summit” (College E and College I) joined Ann Beheler in a co-presentation for 29 attendees on the project’s strategy and outcome entitled “Successful Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Underserved Students and Proving the Strategies Work.”

Final report - Each “Diversity Summit” team submitted a final report analyzing both the effectiveness of the overall program and individual team outcomes and lessons learned. By the time the final reports were submitted, there were only eight remaining “Diversity Summit” teams. The other two teams had dropped out.

School	Final outcomes
College A	Met two of three goals; increased female completion by 5 and streamlined internal processes for better advising, plus now also awards certificates automatically
College B	Unsuccessful; had trouble connecting with local high schools for outreach; attempted pivot to I-BEST blended classroom retention never went forward
College C	Met two of three goals; increased female enrollment from 34.5% to 36.5%; pursued new outreach recruitment strategies to undecided students (included using robo-call system for recruiting)
College D	Unsuccessful; original plan for Latino outreach had trouble; pivot to student mentorship plan for retention wasn’t well managed by faculty member and likely will not be continued
College E	Met all three of its goals; increased female enrollment in entry level IT courses, increased female completion of those entry level IT courses, then increased retention of those female students by enrolling them in the follow-up IT course
College G	Not much success in recruitment goals, but the new PAL (Pathway Advocate Liaison) position was a big hit – other departments are following a similar model in assigning one person to manage student pathways and completion
College H	Met both goals (increase overall female enrollment from 13.8% to 14.8% and increase conversion rate of female applicants from admitted to enrolled by 5%) plus also revived a previously defunct outreach committee
College I	Just barely missed one of their goals (increasing female enrollment from 16.5% to 20.7%; they hit 19.65%); they believe they also met the goal of increasing the rate of “intent to graduate” but cannot prove it - staff turnover hurt the data collection

Of the 21 total goals proposed by the eight teams, at the time of the final report submission, 10 goals (48%) were completed, 5 (24%) were partially completed, and 6 (29%) were not completed.

Note also that aside from any empirical change in enrollments, six (75%) believed that involvement in the “Diversity Summit” initiative had a positive impact on their school and/or program. Seven (88%) presented project evidence to their administration; of those, six (75%) plan to adopt those strategies long-term going forward.

Below is a summary of responses to specific final report questions related to challenges and lessons learned.

What were your “Diversity Summit” team’s biggest challenges and barriers and how did you overcome them?

- College A
- \* The project was purposefully aligned with pathway / stackable credentials which lessened the impact of the programs facing lower enrollment due to how the institution reinterpreted how they utilize Title IV funds.
  - \* Was able to navigate internal barriers with ease regarding potential ways to use (or design) campus systems due to one of the members to the project had prior experience with campus IT.

The CTC notes that this college also quickly realized that using the “NSF grant” phrase opened a lot of institutional doors and lowered barriers. Also, because of all of the IR reports this college team was requesting, the registrar changed the awarding policy – now certificates and degrees are awarded automatically without a student having to formally request them.

- College B
- \* For local reasons, we were unable to fully take advantage of the opportunities presented to us through Diversity Summit.
  - \* Faculty and staff did not have time to visit local high schools that had significant Latino populations. As well, their administration changed early on and they lost the program's champion to some extent. College B pivoted their action plan to focus on retaining the Latino students they have versus recruitment.
- College C
- \* Tracking students through the various semesters which was overcome by having a proactive member in Data Science helped obtain the stats we needed.
  - \* Contacting the students in several ways (email, texting, robo-calling) and creating a way to track responses. We overcame this by creating a database and working with Data Science to help us obtain student list and contact information.
  - \* All the red tape and delay involved with working with a professional marketing team.
- College D
- \* The faculty member who promoted the grant departed in May 2017 and her position remained unfilled—due to budgetary reasons—for the 2017-18 academic year. Other faculty members did not support pursuing the grant, though one helped with developing the student mentor program. Political developments and the memories of the ICE raids in the city related to those developments forced a revision of goals.
- The CTC notes that when this college pivoted from recruiting new Latino students to retaining the students already enrolled, it created a student mentor program. Work study students were paid to serve as mentors, which was understandably popular with the mentors.
- College E
- \* Getting in touch with the home school population for recruitment. Our hope was to combine forces with College E's recruitment office for recruitment activities, but we didn't reach out to that group specifically.
  - \* We made little progress working with PR to revise outreach/career awareness materials for IT during the grant period, but are on track now.
  - \* Our advising team member was unable to host the planned monthly lunch awareness session because of his other job demands. Instead, we combined forces with the NSF ATE grant and used a team member from that grant to provide wraparound support to entry level Networking students.
- College G
- \* Tracking students when they enroll is difficult but we are working with Intuition Research to open the lines of communication and obtain the needed data reports.
  - \* Our biggest challenge around the PAL (Pathway Advocate Liaison) position was proving the need and narrowing down the job description. Once it was approved, the position really spoke for itself. Administration could see the need and response of having someone recruit for specific programs as opposed to general recruitment for enrollment.
- College H
- \* Getting the word out on events and getting responses.
  - \* Having enough time and resources to do all the outreach we wanted to do. 2/3 of the team members had little impact on the planning or execution of the plan.
- College I
- \* For boosting enrollment, encouraging students to stay the course was one challenge. The biggest hurdle was providing students with opportunities to listen and be encouraged by employees as well as peers in the field. To overcome this challenge any opportunity to speak with female students was highly encouraged by faculty to motivate and provide resources that would help students stay motivated to complete their degrees.

What advice would you give to the next group of “Diversity Summit” teams? That is, what do you wish someone had told you at the start of this initiative?

- College A      \* Our project did not utilize as many resources as we could have; in large part this was due to the timeline. We recognized that the program needed us to ensure that funds expended went to support students who would complete the program by May of 2018. We were also quite lucky that others within our institution quickly recognized the things we were doing, as a result, we did not need to allocate grant dollars to support the initiatives.
- College B      \* Faculty and staff and their supervisors need to be involved. There needs to be solid plans as to how and by whom the work will be accomplished. For our college X hours of re-assigned time should have been documented and signed off by all supervisors.
- College C      \* It will take way more time than you think to get anything done. Make sure the people in your group are onboard and don't plan to leave anytime soon.
- College D      \* Have a strong sense of what the college hopes to accomplish in the process and clearly define roles and expectations for those involved. Have a Plan B or C ready to deal with uncertainties that may arise, such as the departure of team members.
- College E      \* To have a support team waiting back on campus to help carry out the initiatives that were designed during the Summit.
- College G      \* Review your goals regularly. As you go through the process, so many things can get you sidetracked, especially if you have other duties and projects to juggle.
- College H      \* Be sure you have a good team, regardless of their titles.  
\* Get more input from students in the populations you are trying to reach of what activities would be of the most interest
- College I      \* Rather than spend all the energy in only the recruitment initiative spend some time and resources on a retention initiative to mentor, motivate, and maintain students already in the program.

CTC staff members also spent time reviewing the entire “Diversity Summit” process to look for lessons learned or other overall areas of improvement.

#### February 2017 Workshop Action Plan “Lessons Learned”

- \* Be clearer up front on what constitutes an action plan with measurable impact. More time should have been spent exploring the “so what?” principle of program success. That is, it's not enough to hold an event and tally the attendees. Extra steps must be taken to see what happens after that event (i.e. did any of the attendees register for classes?) to prove that the event made a difference.
- \* Some teams initially wanted to simply improve the female/male ratio. But the goal behind the “Diversity Summit” was to grow the overall enrollment numbers by recruiting and retaining new female students. That is, rather than just swap men for women, the goal is to add more women on top of the current men student levels. This was not well-communicated to the teams at the February 2017 workshop; as a result, many weeks were spent on action plan revisions.
- \* Explain the concept of baseline numbers. There was some surprising confusion on this concept. That is, in order to make an “apples to apples” measurement of future enrollment growth, the CTC required enrollment numbers for fall 2016 be attached to the action plan goals. Those 2016 numbers were then measured against 2017-18 numbers.
- \* The “ramp up” process – involving the action plan revisions and also the approvals and signatures of the service agreements for the expense reimbursements – took longer than expected. By the time the CTC had the action plans

and contracts done, it was already April when faculty were busy with finals and the school year was winding down. There was no time to affect change in students for fall classes. It therefore may not be wise to run a February event to drive September impacts. Instead, a November summit would allow time to implement action plan strategies in the spring for impact in the fall.

### 2017-18 Implementation “Lessons Learned”

- \* It proved very difficult to closely monitor, track, and mentor so many teams with so many different goals. Either allow them to pursue their action plan goals on their own without ongoing monitoring or insist that each team pursue similar action plan goals to keep things simpler and more manageable. Another idea would be to limit the number of teams or cap the number of action plan goals per team.
- \* Very few teams reported conducting any sort of survey or focus group to measure impact or effectiveness of their “Diversity Summit” events. In hindsight, the value of those sorts of tools should have been emphasized during the February workshop. This goes back to the concern above regarding the “so what?” concept. Events do not equal success on their own. The implementation needed further follow up to see what happened after the events.
- \* More than one team had a hard time getting a foot in the door “cold” at high schools. Calls were not returned, meeting requests fizzled. High school outreach requires persistence and creativity.
- \* Many “Diversity Summit” teams lost momentum when personnel changes reassigned the project’s internal champion. It’s important to maintain staff continuity within the teams. Further, although every team sent three people to the February 2017 in-person workshop, by the end of the project’s term it was clear in some cases that only one person was doing the “Diversity Summit” work. That result undermined the entire “team approach” to the project and understandably limited the results.
- \* Some teams unwisely targeted young high school students on a project that was demanding immediate enrollment impact in the next two semesters.