

Measurement guidelines to determine community college success are on a precipice: colleges are teetering between compliance with benchmarks and defining student success. The reality is colleges, and every college employee, need to understand the areas on which a college's success is measured. To ensure that understanding is not only wide, but deep, Bakersfield College set about discovering if significant dialogue on benchmarks would unbind the pathway to action. Bakersfield College discovered it is not the frequency of dialogue, but the nature of the dialogue itself, that is key to understanding the critical nature of student success, and the information which can be revealed with a focused approach to data evaluation. Student success is complex and the measurement of student success doubly so – Bakersfield College found social mobilization was the key to get people engaged in data.

Often, educational data doesn't tell the true story without context. Sometimes an emphasis on data oversimplifies, or under-reports, key factors, erasing the importance of the individual. Bakersfield College wanted its employees to think about data in a different way. Albert Einstein said "Many of the things you can count, don't count. Many of the things you can't count, really count." And that is so true about community college data. Enter the Bakersfield College Renegade Scorecard

Bakersfield College's approach to data comprehension required flipping the meaning through a social mobilization strategy. The strategy required testing comprehension through the use of iClickers and a "Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down/Hang Loose" strategy of evaluating understanding. The entire process required a shift in Bakersfield College's cultural ownership of data to create accountability in a meaningful way. The goal was to "unveil" and organically engage the college in specific data, develop a vision for how it can be used, and to share this with our colleagues.

Bakersfield College used California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office data as an example to build upon. Using points indicative of success and learning, the college started with simple governance committee buy-in to build momentum. The delivery was through story telling – making the data real to employees, even those far from the classroom. Through the iClickers, committee members provided anonymous evaluation of the data, and the onscreen results revealed that by-and-large, employees understood the data shown. People were provided an opportunity to share why they voted the way they did, and that is when the magic happened. Thoughtful discussions and questions and applications of the data ensued.

As the Bakersfield College Renegade Scorecard moved the needle on data comprehension within our own organization, we realized exactly what we had, and took the show on the road. We invited in community members and education partners for deep conversations about how student success is possible, and where it starts. We illustrated the pathways to student success through the information revealed in the Bakersfield College Renegade Scorecard. For Bakersfield College, data is no longer daunting. The BC institutional scorecard is more than a report or a dashboard; the scorecard represents institution-set standards that enable BC to assess its work and pursue continuous improvement through collegially-set targets that stretch and focus resources, and personal and intellectual capital.

The process for creating a Scorecard like Bakersfield College's is simple. Start with a few key data points – the fewer the better. Too many, and your audience will disappear and you'll lose the conversation before it starts. Understand that data isn't perfect. Just work with what you have. Then, once you start the dialogue, record the conversations and document the effort. Build upon the dialogue. Stay true to the dialogue, no matter how much it hurts, and document your lessons learned and next steps.