

Katy Oliveira (00:00):

In this episode, I'm talking with Kathy James, Dr. Ranya Sellman, and Dr. Ya Fond about how they're building a strong collaboration effort between faculty and student affairs to improve not only the student experience, but to also improve student outcomes. At Austin Community College, you'll learn how they've been able to consolidate multiple disconnected systems into one platform to help faculty and student affairs work together to better serve their students. How a pilot partnership between a C C's public and social services division and student affairs has become the gold standard for collaboration between academic and student affairs at Austin Community College and how faculty are being trained not only on how to use technology like the Civic Plus Learning platform, but how to leverage them to actually improve student experience and student outcomes by making their work easier and more effective. Kathy James is the executive team in advising and Affinity program is a 19 year veteran of Austin Community College.

(01:05):

She serves as a process coordinator for student affairs Academic advising support services. Dr. Rania Solomon serves as professor, assistant department chair and faculty advisor for the childcare and development department at a CC mentoring college. Students. Interested in the field of early childhood education has been a primary focus of her professional career for over 10 years. And Dr. Yel fan, it's the Dean of Public and Social Services Division at Boston Community College where she manages 10 instructional programs for representing workforce and academic transfer. Prior to serving as a dean, she served as the department chair of the teacher training program for 10 years where she was a strong advocate for supporting students through faculty led advising. But before we dive in, take a moment to subscribe to the show to stay up to date on the latest and data informed approaches to Student Impact team A CC. Welcome to Next Practice, says, I'm so happy to be talking to each of you today.

Kathy James (02:12):

Hello, Katie, how are you?

Katy Oliveira (02:14):

I'm well, thank you. Kathy. Good. Hi Katie. Hi. Thank you so much. Hello. Thank you all so much for joining. I want to get started by, for the audience if some of you have heard our other episode with a CC with Dr. Ruth Reinhardt, but we brought in a full team of folks today to talk about how student success and faculty are partnering together. So I want y'all to tell me from your perspective about a CC, who it serves and what each of your roles are in that work

Kathy James (02:52):

You'd like me to start. Absolutely. So accs Community College, we serve quite an expansive district of students throughout the state of Texas. Our general enrollment with all of our

programs serves about 70,000 students between our adult education and our continuing ed and our traditional student population. So we run the gamut and director from high school students. We have a good contingency of adult learners. In fact, our highest population are adult learners, but each and every one of our students that come to a CC have access to an assigned area study advisor or faculty advisor or advisor in their programs that's designed to really make sure that they can get through accs journey as seamlessly with as few barriers as possible.

Dr. Giao Phan (03:49):

Yeah, I think I'd like to add to that we actually, we have a guided pathways model. So in our institution we have 10 areas of study and so each area of study focused on a specific career focused area. So within my division, which is public and social services, I have two areas of studies, study and public and social services. Where that is important is because within the community college structure we have transfer programs and we have workforce programs. And in our division we have a lot of workforce programs that are very small. A lot of our department chairs and our faculty also serve as faculty advisors, which we'll get into. But I think that's a really important component of our focus in terms of supporting students, advising them, and helping them make really good career decisions early on.

Dr. Rania Salman (04:42):

I dunno if I have anything to add. So I was only going to say yes, our name is Austin Community College, but we're really a leading force of education in central Texas in general. So it's not just going to be centered specifically in Austin, but our program works with a lot of outlying communities

Katy Oliveira (05:04):

And what is everyone's role and part of that work. And I think Kathy, if you want to start, we'll go just in the same order as before. As before.

Kathy James (05:13):

Yes. My role as the executive dean for advisings, more or less the process policies and procedures folder for all of our advising student services at A CC, as Dr. Fawn mentioned, we work by area of study, so our advisors are housed on our 11 counselors. All same services are provided on each campus. So there is a set of advisors assigned by area of study as the expert advisors in those areas. So when it comes to using our advising mediated technology or if our advising training, anything else related to processes and procedures, I have some oversight and support in throughout the district. So when it comes to students' assignments and getting the services that they need, making sure that everyone's consistent up to date and all the information that's necessary, all the changes that occur, whatever initiatives that a CC has for our programs and student progress, we all

work collaboratively throughout the district to see that we can accomplish those for the students' benefits.

Dr. Giao Phan (06:30):

And as the instructional dean over the public and social services division, my role is to support 10 academic programs and helping the department chairs rescheduling their curriculum, advising just any kind of resources that they may need to help support their students to make them successful. And as Kathy indicated, in terms of our programs, we offer our courses across 11 campuses and ACC is the size of Connecticut if my memory is correct. So it's a really expansive area. So our department chairs do see our students, but they don't see all of our students. And so that's where our connection with student affairs, Brianna's role in really understanding advising and all the support services we offer to our students is really critical in terms of making sure our students are really successful. So my area is more on the instructional side of it. Our college tends to bifurcate the system. Student affairs is on one side, instructions on the other side, but our goal is really to bridge the two together and make sure that we offer a complete set of support services for our students.

Dr. Rania Salman (07:43):

I would tell you that my primary role is a faculty member. I know department chairs in my title, but I always tell people I'm a professor first because whereas Kathy and Yao are definitely involved but are at a higher level, I'm in charge of one specific program of YOWs. And so it's really relevant for me to be front and center with students in addition to utilizing the online programs.

Katy Oliveira (08:19):

One thing that really stands out, I have that opportunity to hear Yao and Kathy present in the fall, and one of the things that really stands out in your work is your successful partnership between student affairs and faculty, how you work together to ensure that your students are not only supported, but they have the guidance that they need to reach their goals and to do that in a way that's timely and smooth as possible. Can you share a little bit about that model and what it looks like if you'll give us a 10,000 foot view and then we can get more into the specifics?

Kathy James (08:54):

Yes. So as Dr. F mentioned, we started out this entire journey through the Guided Pathways model and the primary focuses was to really try and to categorize our different programs so that as students' journey through a c, c, that they could stay on track, not take more hours than were required, get very good instructional information, program information, transfer information, career information, all in somewhat of a nutshell, we had to start first with determine a model where instructional departments, deans and departments knew who

their students were. That was the first step is we have a large body of students, but all the departments, deans and department chairs weren't always initially aware of who their students were coming in the door that have chosen their major. So by categorizing at least the programs by area of study, we started to hone in on our specific student populations and their associations with the different programs.

(10:03):

So as we started to develop that, the next step was how do we get that information to deans and department chairs in a timely manner so that partnership could really begin to build and develop. The students are everyone's students. They're assigned to advisors, the advisors work by program, but the journey is so much better when the departments are aware who their students are and they're just as invested in the students completing their programs as anyone else's. So we started with identifying the students, making sure that deans and department chairs knew who their students were. We started connecting with deans and department chairs to the area study advisors so that they knew who was advising their students and we knew who to send the students to for the things that we did not know about. And it's important as we talk more and more about these programs, the true experts in these areas are the faculty and the deans and the department chairs.

(11:05):

Advisors can certainly mitigate resources and barriers and challenges that students may have just on an academic level. But when it comes to the point where students are going to matriculate or transfer or want to go out to the workforce partnership that we have with the departments become so much more important. So we have totally evolved and that's where the use of the technology has come into play. What is the easiest way for everybody that are working with students to be able to get the information about the students and be able to provide information to the students so they can make informed decisions? Hence, we've had many iterations of technology to attempt to do that. I think that in collaboration, communication and the partnerships, we've realized the needs need to be at least one system. We were operating at least 10 different areas where we had to go to get just one student's complete information.

(12:04):

So we over literally an eight year period tried to get to the point where that was minimized to at least one system that could connect everything. And that's where CITAs learning platform came in, which allowed us to even develop the partnerships from an advising standpoint with the faculty to be deans and department chairs. And that's where we are now. Everyone can identify the students by a search, we can assign by programs, we can communicate and collaborate informationally in one system where everyone can see notes, can see student details, can see information. So that's how we have evolved to where we are now. And Dr. F and her department have really crystallized what that true arrangement is when you talk about a partnership between student affairs advising and faculty advising, just looking at it completely from the student's lens. So as we've developed the technology, we've shared it, we've trained it, and we've begun to use it, Rana and Yao can really tell you

now from a faculty advising standpoint, how much easier it has made it for us to at least understand the roles and the true responsibilities of what advising is like when you're working with students from the point of entry to the point of exit.

(13:32):

And Dr. V, I'll let you talk a little bit more about the fun times we've had with technology.

Dr. Giao Phan (13:38):

Yeah, no, I think it's been really wonderful with the SOTA learning solutions because we're using one system. And so kind of the macro view again of all this is that student affairs is really great with the big general advising. And as Kathy indicated, when it comes to the career focus, the folks who do it best are the folks who are the professors, the department chairs and the program. And so for me, there was a disconnect that was occurring because a lot of our department chairs were like, well, student affairs doesn't understand our students and we want to take it over. But the thing is they didn't realize how complex advising is. And so CITA Learning Solutions gave us that space to bridge the two worlds because now they can access the students, it doesn't matter at what point the department chair comes in, they can see what previous advisors have indicated, the communications that occurred.

(14:33):

And now our department chair advisors or faculty advisors are coming in and putting in various specific information in terms of the career advice they gave, the types of classes to take, those types of things. And so I think in terms of our success is bridging the two worlds because now our department chairs and Rana can talk about this, really understand the intricacies of advising and then can add her human part of it because Rana is really, really wonderful with students. She loves the students, she's going to take the time to understand the students and she sees all the students, she teaches all the classes. So it's that relationship building and really guiding the students the way they need to go with that. And so what we're looking for with that is consistency in terms of how we advise information we put into the system. And I think for me is the big part with how Kathy and I partnered on this, is that we're not taking shortcuts.

(15:28):

We put the whole entire division through every single element of the student affairs advising ecosystem. Essentially we didn't pick pieces in this or that. It's really okay, this is where they're going to come in. Let me talk to you about TSI, let me talk to you about financial aid appeals. But our department chairs know the whole gamut of the system. And so when they go in and they talk to the students, they have a more depth and understanding and they know who to reach out to immediately. So our students aren't being moved to another person each time or it's, wait a minute, you got to send another email to another person and it's all centralized. The exciting part for me as a dean, especially in Texas since we moved to House Bill eight, which is based upon completion or the college's funding is based upon

completion, it's a space for me to look at how many touch points did we have of our students, do we see those outcomes improving?

(16:25):

And Kathy can attest to this in a very short period of time because of those very, very intricate personal touchpoints. We've seen certain programs just boom up in terms of completion, but it can't happen with one system being more broad. And then you have the department chairs are very specific. We're bridging those two pieces together. And then the next part for us is to look at the data, right? Kathy pulling out the different departments to see how many touch points did they have, what were the overarching issues that the students kept asking about? So we can do better training with that too. So I'll defer it to RAN in terms of the department point of view on this.

Dr. Rania Salman (17:03):

Yeah, thank you. Thank you for what you said though too. So I think the human perspective is really what's relevant to me in CITAs learning because I am a newbie to a CC sort of, and being able to document and put notes into the platform that are relevant to each specific student is what's really important to me. And being able to, like ya said, those touch points and track the students' persistence and success and their journey along the way, and having everyone be able to see that and see the picture the student has painted of their academic journey is really important to me. The career focus and the mentorship is also is fantastic. I can put a note in the system that says, this student wants to transfer to this college and these are the things they need, and I told them to do this.

(18:15):

That specific career piece is really relevant to me, and much like Yael said, my department is, I call it the unicorn because I know every department's not like this, but I teach a lot of the graduate, the courses everyone takes towards the end of their program and I love being a mentor and that faculty connection and seeing them start in the program and then continue and succeed is really relevant to me. I have one daughter, but I also say that I have 25 babies because I have 25 interns this semester who are all going to graduate and seeing their journey is really fulfilling.

Katy Oliveira (19:02):

Yeah, it's really remarkable, the collaboration. And I do think technology is a really big piece of the puzzle. We hear more and more the desire of institutions have 50 to 200 different systems, which they're using for various reasons and having so many tabs and having fatigue of having to go to different systems for different information, not to mention having to pay and maintain those systems and make sure that users are enabled to use the system, the desire to consolidate systems so that you have one clear picture of the student is definitely a direction we're going. And we can talk a little bit more about how you're enabling technology in a moment. But before we get to that piece, I'm curious about how you are navigating the challenges between having faculty and student affairs work together. You

alluded to it. Yeah, when you were saying our faculty didn't trust advising, and that's not the first time I've heard that.

(19:56):

I've also heard from the advising side, well, the faculty just send us an alert and that's pretty much our only interaction with them. They won't use the technology, they're not supporting the student. They can do both ways depending on the institution. And there's a lot of challenges and sometimes finger pointing every now and again. And so I'm curious to know how have you navigated those challenges? How have you built this close collaboration and teamwork? And if you have any tips for others who might be struggling to build that collaboration, where would you start? What would you recommend people do to help to get folks aligned that might otherwise be separate working together, but working separately with students often?

Dr. Giao Phan (20:43):

Yeah, it's an interesting point because my point of coming, because I've been a dean for like eight years, so the first, what, four or five years, I kept hearing student affairs keeps messing up our students. They're not advising them correctly. So really our point was really frustration. There's just so much frustration. They're not, the students aren't getting the correct information depending on the program. And then that opened up the space to go, okay, y'all really frustrated. What are we going to do to shift this paradigm? We can't keep complaining about it. We also know you need to work with the students as well as student affairs needs to work with the students, so how do we bridge that? And so for our division was really that space of frustration. And then really with Kathy coming in, it's that awareness of how complex advising really is.

(21:32):

And a CC has over a hundred programs, so advisors aren't going to know every little thing. So it's creating a little bit of compassion really to step back and go, oh, I didn't realize they have to know this and this and this. But the other part that really changed the conversations to go, look, I need help with this. This is the student I have, and Randy can attest to this. We hear this in our trainings, but let me give you this scenario. What do y'all think about this? So opened up the dialogue to go, okay, here are the things that we're seeing in the screen. Here's how we can help the student. And so for me, it's really patience too because my approach was, and Kathy and I talked about this, we're not going to hurry through this. We're not going to do an eight hour thing and it's done.

(22:19):

We did over the course of a year for an hour and a half, once a month because you got to give folks an opportunity to absorb the information and absorb the system. That's really what's changed it. Then as the department chair started to understand it, and they started to have more conversations, they realize there are universal aspects to how we advise, and then that started getting into, oh, I can do this. They're willing to learn the systems, but I also have to preface that with public and social services is a small division. We have a lot of

workforce programs, whereas it's a department of one, like fire emergency management. So the department chairs were willing to learn more than I think what some faculty will, but I think at the same time, they really believe in our students. They love our students and want our students to be successful. So that was a foundation. We just stick with that part of it. The other pieces will come, but we kept scaffolding, right? Kathy?

Kathy James (23:20):

Yes,

Dr. Giao Phan (23:20):

We kept going really slow, and then there were days we went back to CITAs Learning Solutions. We did three sessions on it because we had to make sure that everyone understood it. The other part too that I think is really important to our success, we don't just take the faculty through it. We took our administrative assistants through it. We took our whole division through it because everyone's helping everyone. The first point of contact is not always the department chair. So that helped bridge a lot of the frustrations and then Kathy and Hilda going, yeah, we're frustrated too. That just humanized some of the systems issues we run into. But that really just I think, deflated some of the frustrations.

Dr. Rania Salman (23:59):

I was going to say one of the things that has been really great is that the collaboration has been intentional, and yeah, I was correct. We had sometimes twice a month meetings for about a year, and as somebody who likes to understand systems and why we do them, not how, but why. It was never this top-down approach of Kathy and her team saying, this is what we're doing, this is how you do it now, go run with it. It was more of a like, well, what do y'all think about this? How can we help you do this? And I appreciated as a faculty member being able to be a part of those conversations and to be included in having a voice. And I think that that collaboration was really relevant for me as a professor.

Katy Oliveira (24:54):

Yeah, it sounds like that intentional approach coupled with approaching it from a strategic enablement perspective versus a point and click training perspective, which is where I think a lot of people start and get stuck. How can we leverage these tools, these relationships to make your job easier, to make you more effective at your job, to make us better at helping students together? It's coming from a different perspective that I think can be a lot more productive. Kathy, I'd love to hear from your side, your perspective from the other side of that, the aisle, I know if I'm the right word, edit that out, but from the other perspective, from the advising and student affairs perspective, your take.

Kathy James (25:41):



Yeah. So we started with no one would ever intentionally misadvise a student. That's where we started. We started with mistakes will happen, but rarely are they intentional. And having the technology now to have a bird's eye view of the student, you literally can go onto the platform and you can see most things you need to know about the student, how many majors they have, what their GPA and what their academic status is, how many credit hours they've taken, possibly how many times they've changed their major. We used to be able to see financial aid. We do not now, but thus information we get from students along the way. And you can see who their assigned advisors are. You can see every message from every person that the student has ever seen, and you can paint the entire picture of where the students have gone, who they've spoken with, and possibly what information did they get.

(26:44):

And then we can make a decision about what is it that we need to say and want to say, but it needs to be the same conversation across the board. So the moment we all realize that no one is intentionally trying to deter students, sabotage students, misadvised, it's just quite so many components. And the first is understanding the college readiness piece and the TSI. And there's only so many classes a student can take, and then there's are the courses they want available when they need them. And so the whole scheduling aspect of advising, but as Ranya and Yao said, we knew the frustration coming into it very clearly. So we wanted to just address it from the bottom with where do we start and where do we go? And I think it was the pace and the consistency and the intentionality and the empathy of each other late as it went through of what exactly what was going on with the students.

(27:53):

And then the other things that departments learned about their programs that had nothing to do with advising, but it seems to be the tendency, whatever it was, it had to do with advising. And then you learn along the way, oh no, this student may have changed majors. Oh no, it's a financial aid thing. Oh no, they're going to go to this school. So they did it because of that reason. And so there are so many intricacies and ways around the thing to get the student where they want that it is not very evident initially until you get your hands in there and you realize what's going on. But that has been the exciting, it has really been the exciting piece when it clicked for everybody exactly what was going on and the bravery of the departments to want to tackle it. Because one thing I think that PSS will agree is it was no starting in the middle unless you knew what was happening in the beginning, you couldn't assume what was happening later because a lot of things really were initiated in the beginning.

(29:00):

And unless you start there and can work your way through that student's journey, then you don't always understand the why. And Ranya said it. The most important thing is why did you do this? Why did you say that? Why are we doing it this way? And then what we do? And then we learned that along the way in this process, and we kept going back. Now you said, if we didn't think we covered it, we went back and we didn't just stop at the training. And then the practice, there's a chat. It doesn't stop at the end of training, there's a chat you

can get on, you can call someone. So departments have developed relationships with their students. The department has developed relationships with themselves, and then they've developed relationships with us. And it doesn't stop there and it doesn't end. It's ongoing and it's continuous because what everyone has learned, it's the same thing, different every day.

(30:04):

You're just not quite sure what you're going to encounter. And all the training that we give, you'll never be prepared for what it is, but we'll know just enough of where to go to find out what's going on. And we call it relationship when you're in it, but I think now a year and a half later, I think we can actually call it friendships that we're in it together for the students. And I think as a result, the programs are seeing such significant success with their students. Advising is really very supportive and available to answer questions along the way. And this is a perfect model that with the use of the technology and the information it provides, we can expand this to other departments and programs, but they got to be willing to want to understand the technology and go through the training and understand how to really use it to the benefit of the departments and the programs.

Katy Oliveira (31:08):

I wanted to get more into that because I can just hear the hands raising in the audience and thing. How did you get faculty there? How did you get faculty to come to the trainings? And then also how are you managing the trainings? I've had the honor of talking quite often with the a CC team, and I know that they have a secret weapon when it comes to training. So we'll talk a little bit, let's talk about that. So partially how are you running training there and strategic enablement, maybe even a better professional development, a better label for this, but also how are you getting faculty to engage with it?

Kathy James (31:44):

Well, we'll start with the dean, the dean, once the deans are on board and then determining specifically who's going to do this work. Once we get to that point, then our training team contextualizes it for that department. Yes, we have a curriculum of how we train, but we change it again according to the groups that we're working with. It's not one way, just like it's no one way to work with students. It is not one way to work with every department. There's a personalities that we need to understand. There's dynamics we need to understand, but once at the departmental level, deans and department chairs identify faculty who want to do this work, then the training is consistent and we pace ourselves and we're deliberate and we're intentional. So really does start at the deans of department levels to determine how in depth do we want to go into this work. And trust me, not everybody wants it. Some of it is give them to me when they're past college readiness, when there's no holes, when there's no financial, when it's all great and wonderful, then we do some transactional advising. But it really starts at DS and department sheriff's level.

Dr. Giao Phan (33:06):

Yeah, I think in our division, we started with a commitment to advising. And so it is a period of time where we had conversations that set it up with each department chair, and then we moved into the division level. But for our division, we committed to once a month for an hour and a half, and it was always a third Friday of every month. And that's where that consistency factor came in. And then it was never overwhelming. There were times we just got through one slide, Kathy, and that's where it was, right? It's just where the group was. But over time, I felt like the conversation became more meaningful because the department chairs were bringing up the students, Kathy, here's the student issue. And then everyone would look at the same profile in the system and then walk through that discussion. So once the department chair is starting to see the relevance of that topic to them and the guidance they received, and Kathy's teams are always really good about being really, really responsive quickly.

(34:11):

That was the other part I think it really helped. Between the time period when we weren't training, that's where the success came in. And then sometimes just because the dean, you get to call things and people show up. So that's the other part of it. I just have to say that. But really what Kathy said is just wonderful. All of our students, we all have to support them together. And so we really can't be successful. We got disconnect pieces. I've always felt that way. I was a faculty advisor myself for 10 years before I became a dean. And the successes, that part that we see in the classroom where they're, they see the students every day, they know the students, but they're missing that advising piece. So it was all bridged together. So I think that's really what helped with the success. And then you have faculty like Randy who's not scared to ask a question. They threw every question at Kathy's team constantly, and we worked or wait through And what about this scenario? What about that scenario? And there were times like TSI, Kathy, you could see everyone's brains bugging out because it was so complicated, but it was okay, and we came back to it again. So I think that's part of the success too.

Dr. Rania Salman (35:22):

Yes. And some of these meetings were at eight o'clock in the morning. And so as a workforce program, I teach classes at night. And so yes, I was just going to say that I probably didn't know this a year and a half ago, but it has made my job easier I think a year and a half later. And I think it's made our program more student focused by having to go through this, sorry, not having to go, but it was right. It was interesting to see how many of our departments had the same issues in varying forms and collectively finding a way to meet students' needs.

Kathy James (36:14):

And for us, just actually knowing who the faculty advisors were. I mean, even now in our institution, there are many faculty advisors and we still don't know who they all are. So when

you don't know who they are, we don't know what they're saying and we don't know how to help them, and we don't know how to bridge the gap. So now that we've been able to create this model that PSS has been literally developing for us, once everyone knows we're doing, we're on the same team, we're doing the same things. We just got to know and we got to put all the information in the same place. We've discovered, I don't know about halfway through, like I said, we've had many forms of technology that we use to advise students and faculty was using online services and student affairs was using the CITAs learning platform. (37:19):

Well, instruction thought we saw their platform, so we knew what was going on in their world. And we went, no, we didn't even know this thing still existed. It was supposed to have gone away long ago. And so that advisors don't have access to seeing it, but that's where all their notes and all their information, it was very structured, but we had no idea. And then they didn't have access to Cita platform, so they couldn't see what was going. So when we got on the same technology, that's changing. And even though we aren't at the same place with other departments, we are in the same place with the technology that at least there is one place everyone's going to. So we're weaning it off of the online services into a place where everyone can see anything. And because we're all getting into the same system, we're starting to identify more faculty who are advising students, and therefore now we can work together with some of the students that we're working with. And it's much more transparency in all of the efforts now. So this has really started the process of us identifying all the faculty throughout the college who want to engage in advising at different levels. And we can support that with the training and the technology to bring us all into the same place.

Dr. Giao Phan (38:43):

And I want to add, Kathy, as you were talking, kept thinking about note taking because the CITA solutions gave us a space to take, everyone puts notes in. And that's a huge cultural shift I think for faculty because faculty are so used to just advising and then moving on to the next thing. And so one of the things we talked about a lot in our trainings was accountability, being responsible about whatever you write in there. Because if something goes wrong, we're going to go back to those notes. If the student decides not to come back to you, we have those notes to know this is the guidance that the student has received. And I think that's been a really important part of, I think, an organizational or cultural shift in terms of how faculty approach advising. It's easy just to go, Hey, take these classes.

(39:30):

But if it's in the system and then another person can see it, you have more consistency and it helps the students in the long run. And one of the things I think was really important for us was our fire program's a good example of this. And manias program's a really good example, this, there's very specific pieces, requirements in order to get into the program. So because these department chairs were coming in at such an early part of the process, we could actually help the students who claim the major, who shouldn't have been in that major early on, versus letting the students just kind of flow out there for six years and then bring

coming back to it later. And that's where Kathy's team would come in because the department chairs would reach out to her and say, Hey, the student really shouldn't have declared this major.

(40:13):

Then Kathy's team could come in and bring in another set of advisors or another program. I think that's a critical part of centralizing the system and seeing the notes early on that the student did get the right guidance. And then where the student decides to go after that, at least there's a trail of some sort to help the student. The one thing I'm really learning about our college is an institution. Not all of our students have been in a college institution. So part of it's so critical of the department chairs is to helping them navigate the system. And the system's really complex. If you've never been in there, especially as a first gen student, there are a lot of intimidating factors, but if you know can go back to that one human person who's always going to be there for you, it changes the dynamic. So I think that's a really important piece that became more cognizant of as I was watching our department chairs advise more.

Katy Oliveira (41:08):

Well, we're starting to come to the end of our time together, and I want to have time for one more question. It sounds like sprinkled throughout the conversation, you've mentioned so many successes, but I want to ask you specifically, what has this model, this way of working together and the technology allows you to achieve? And what problems has it allowed you to solve or ways has it made your institution a better place?

Kathy James (41:39):

The first and foremost achievement, it has gotten us all in the same place at the same time, and it's helped us all to realize just how vital each part of what we do with our students play and the eye opening of what happens when the student starts the process into a c, c, their journey while they're here. And then what is the outcome the technology? And Y has said wanting to try to find out the measures. I think that the technology shows it very clearly what the engagement has been with the students, whether it's been with the deans or the departments and the faculty or the advisor. How much engagement and how does it correlate because we don't necessarily know causation, but how does that engagement correlate to persistence and completion? And I think that the test in the end for using this model is that graduation or completion rates for departments will become so much more evident.

(42:46):

And then it'll also help inform when did the successes really change? Was it when the faculty got more involved with the students and the advising piece or in certain programs, is it still the engagement that they have with the student affairs advisors, what we may learn that for very large departments, it may be that they start out with the student affairs advisors and then they transition into their department advisors. And we're working on some models

to see would that be in the best interest of the departments and the students. So starting with small programs like PSS who have the bandwidth, so to speak, to advise their students from entry to exit and then determine and understanding what that engagement is, will help inform us on how we create other levels of advising for faculty and when it should occur, when it should start and when it should end. So that's my take is the fact that we all work together in the training and understanding of the processes and the student journey and the willingness for deans and departments to have faculty advisors to work with their students. I love to see in another year, year and a half, two years, what the outcomes have been. But I think that just the communication and the conversations around advising has been the first indication of success for the college and for the students.

Dr. Giao Phan (44:22):

And I think for me, it's about understanding our system. And that's one thing I really appreciate about this process is the department chairs know about the system. And it's like what I opened up with. We're not moving the students around because the student asked a financial aid question. We're reaching out right then and there and helping the student immediately. And so for me, that's really critical part of the success's understanding how all these components of our college come together to help the student in that moment. And I think that's where I think the empowerment will really occur in terms of really shifting our college in terms of completion and things like that. And then the other part is what we opened up with. It's about relationship building with our students with each other. And once we start seeing our institution as a whole and we all are part of it versus seeing it as different units, we have a great chancellor.

(45:13):

He says, your title is great, but it doesn't define how you lead in your space. And that's where I think we start seeing, getting outside of our titles and just seeing, we're all here to support our students. We're going to do what we need to. And then the other part kind of alluding to what Kathy's talking about is how we code in the system because we could put a code in there like Kathy's indicating we can see if it's advising or it's outreach or it's different pieces, and then we can see the value of those approaches. And a college like ours, it can't be a one size fits all. It has to be diverse systems, diverse approaches for different programs. Our college is so big, but a little bit from each unit really can make a big impact.

Katy Oliveira (45:55):

Yeah. Well, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it, this conversation, and I think the work that you're doing at a CC is just amazing, and I know our audience will get a lot out of your work and what you shared today.

Kathy James (46:12):

Thank you, Katie. We appreciate the opportunity

Dr. Rania Salman (46:14):  
To share.