



Grayson College: TSC Helps Us Ask the Right Questions

“If leadership is not motivated to support and create the vision, then it’s just kind of chaotic, and nobody else really signs on,” says Debbie Barnes-Pyler, chair of Grayson College’s Board of Trustees. “You have to build trust and relationships focused on a shared vision. Without that, you can have niches of success, but you can’t have the broad success you need to help students.”

This attitude — along with the board’s four clear goals — have helped Grayson College make a variety of structural and policy changes that improve service to students. The college’s leaders also credit the Texas Success Center (TSC) with helping them focus their work and use data effectively.

Strong Support With High Expectations

“We’ve learned that we need to provide an overall structure, support for people to bring their ideas to the table, and the expectation that they will consistently execute those ideas over time,” says Grayson President Jeremy McMillen.

“We went from the mid-sixties to the low eighties for course completion with an A, B, or C,” McMillen continues. “And we didn’t ask faculty to give away grades. We asked them what they needed. We used strategies that improve success, such as taking attendance, but we didn’t rely on just one strategy. We trust our faculty. We asked them to tell us what they wanted to do.”

Grayson College Board Focuses on Connecting, Committing, and Completing

Connect

- **Goal 1:** By 2025, Grayson college fall headcount enrollment will increase.
- **Goal 2:** By 2025, an increasing percentage of Grayson College students will enroll in their first designated career course before completion of 15 hours.

Commit

- **Goal 3:** By 2025, the overall successful course completion rate (A, B, or C grades) for the year will increase, reducing all gaps by race/ethnicity and Pell status.

Complete

- **Goal 4:** By 2025, the total annual degrees or certificates awarded will increase.



The college also relies on data to make decisions. “We moved to eight-week courses because of data,” McMillen explains. “When you make this change, students enroll in more classes, and they accelerate their time to degree.” Grayson is working with the TSC to share what it has been learning with other colleges launching eight-week terms.

“One of the board goals was to increase the graduation rate, and the only way to do that, besides just getting more people in, is to get students there quicker,” adds Jackie Butler, one of the college’s trustees. “Now students aren’t spending time and money that don’t get them closer to their goals.”

BOTIs and Texas Pathways

Barnes-Pyler, McMillen, and Butler believe that Texas Pathways and support from the TSC were a critical part of making these transformative changes.

Attending the TSC Board of Trustees Institutes (BOTIs) changed the way trustees made decisions. “We actually worked with our data and learned how to analyze it,” Barnes-Pyler says.

“At a recent BOTI, the TSC had data for all the community colleges in Texas. They showed us our top five degrees or top five programs that had the highest enrollment,” Butler adds. “And then they broke it down and disaggregated the data. That education has been wonderful for us.”

In addition to informing classroom practices, the BOTI training helped Grayson decide how to allocate funds for capital improvement. “We used the data to determine what buildings and facilities we need,” Butler says. “For example, the first facility that we need is a health sciences center because that is our top program. And one of our local hospitals is 129 nurses short.” The college is also working on facilities for additional programs that are expanding and need space, such as surg tech and respiratory therapy.

“The TSC’s BOTI makes us ask the right questions,” Barnes-Pyler says.

“Sometimes those questions are uncomfortable,” McMillen adds. “But we want the best, right? So that that’s why it helps to make sure we’re asking the right questions together.”



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