

**Faculty Inquiry Groups - Spring 2014  
Final Report  
Submitted September 3, 2014  
by Beth Patel**

In January, the BSISC approved a proposal to implement a second round of Faculty Inquiry Groups at COM to follow up on the success of the first round in the fall. The FIGs provide a great opportunity for small groups of faculty to work together to conduct focused classroom research in order to improve teaching, student services, and/or student success. FIGs offer a great professional development opportunity for faculty within and across disciplines. In addition, FIGs are included in one of the goals of the COM Strategic Plan. The goals of FIGs include:

- Creating a culture of collaboration
- Strengthening teaching through inquiry and research
- Improving faculty understanding of student learning

After the proposal was approved, I sent out a request for proposals to all faculty members via a COMall email and information sheets in all faculty mailboxes and held an information sessions to answer questions and offer guidance about the FIG process.

#### Spring 2014 FIG Participants

During spring, two FIG groups formed. In addition, several of the groups from the fall continued their work and implemented findings. Our second round of FIGs culminated in a symposium on Wednesday, August 13 as part of the Flex activities. The two new groups presented their findings, and members of several fall FIGs gave updates about their activities during the spring. We also used this time to elicit ideas and discussions about possible new projects.

### Spring 2014 FIGs

<b>1</b>	Dave Patterson – Library Sarah Frye – Library Gina Cullen – Counseling Caitlin Escobar – Counseling Kristin Perrone – Counseling	<p><b>Inquiry Question</b></p> The librarians were curious how information literacy might intersect with the counselors’ new orientations and their First Year Experience. We decided to focus on citing sources because it is fairly straightforward to measure. What do new COM students know about citations? How do they want to receive instruction about citations?
<b>2</b>	Fernando AgudeloSilva – Biology - Earth and Life Science / Environmental Landscape Maula Allen – Math	<p><b>Inquiry question</b></p> How feasible and effective would it be for biology and math instructors to develop online resources to improve performance of students who take biology classes and need strengthening of their math skills?

I was initially disappointed that we had only two new FIGs for spring. However, as I followed up with participants from the fall FIGs, I realized that there was still a lot of work that was continuing as a result of the earlier projects. At our symposium during Flex week, it was exciting to hear about how the work had continued, including two brand new projects for the fall with the Textbook-on-Loan and First Year Experience programs. I believe that the project met its goals, and I am pleased with the level of enthusiasm and support it has garnered. In addition, there has been an increased awareness of the program. In the past week, I have had inquiries from two people not involved with the FIGs last year contact me to let me know they have ideas they would like to pursue. In addition, I have also been told about new projects that some of our previous FIG members would like to pursue.

### Fall 2013 FIG Updates

<b>1.</b>	Sarah Frye – Library Dave Patterson – Library Laurie Ordin – Math John Erdman – Library	<p><b>Inquiry Question</b></p> Does access to course textbooks impact student success in MATH 103? <p><b>Update</b></p> The librarians worked with Wes Farriss, instructor of Math 103A, to implement the new Textbook-on-Loan program, so students
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		<p>would not have to incur the great expense of buying a textbook. Mr. Farriss agreed to use an older edition of the math textbook, and during the spring, the librarians, with a grant from ASCOM, purchased old editions of the math textbook at a cost of \$5-10/ book. About 40 textbooks were passed out on the first day of class and will be returned at the end of the course. Because of the high cost of new math textbooks, some students would not purchase a textbook, or they would not be able to afford one right away. By providing each student a textbook on the first day of class, this program will help eliminate one of the obstacles to student success.</p>
2.	<p>Gina Cullen – Counseling          Cara Kreit – English          Karen Koenig – College Skills</p>	<p><b>Inquiry question</b>          What do College of Marin students need to know to be most successful during their first semester in college?</p> <p><b>Update</b>          The work of this FIG has led to the creation of a pilot First Year Experience program this fall that is being funded by BSI. The project will provide an English\counseling learning community experience beginning with English 92 and English 98 students in the fall and continuing to English 120 students in the spring. This program involves Caitlin Escobar teaching Counseling 110 and 115, Kristin Perrone teaching Counseling 125 and 110, Karen Koenig teaching English 92 and 98, Cara Kreit teaching English 120, and Gina Cullen project leader.</p>
3.	<p>Patricia Seery - NC ESL          Cheo Massion - NC ESL          Marti Sukoski- NC ESL          Phyllis Johnson - NC ESL          Luz Moreno – Counseling</p>	<p><b>Inquiry Question</b>          At the end of each semester, non-credit ESL instructors, based on the results of the non-credit ESL Level 40 promotion test, recommend students for ESL credit classes. Why is it that so many non-credit ESL students do not make the transition to the ESL credit classes?</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p>Rebecca Beal - Credit ESL          Jeff Cady - Credit ESL          Karen Robinson - Counseling</p>	<p><b>Inquiry Question</b>          What challenges do credit ESL students face when moving from noncredit ESL to credit ESL, and how can the ESL department improve these steps for students? As an ongoing part of this inquiry, we would like to gather information from departments such as Counseling, Admissions, ESL lab, and other relevant departments. This inquiry can continue into spring 2014.</p> <p><b>Update</b>          At the end of the fall semester, the two ESL FIGs gathered and shared their findings about non-credit ESL students and the move from non-credit to credit classes. The groups took their findings to the ESL department and created an action plan to increase awareness about the credit ESL program and to encourage students to make the move to credit courses. The department held two mixers – one daytime and one evening - in the ESL lab and invited non-credit Level 40 classes and credit classes to attend. During the mixers credit students shared information about the program, and non-credit students were able to ask questions and learn about the application process. ASCOM provided funding for food (pizza at night and muffins in the morning), and there were raffle prizes. Members of the department are now trying to gather information about students who moved from non-credit to credit courses this semester and to track levels.</p> <p>In a second project that came out of the FIG, a number of credit ESL students were interviewed about their experience in the credit program. A short video has been made that can be used to show students in the non-credit program.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Nancy Willet – Business          Christine Li – Business          Ross Goodwin – Business</p>	<p><b>Inquiry Question</b>          How does the Business Department clear the pathway for success for students that declare Business as their major and plan to transfer to</p>

	Norm Pacula – Business	<p>a four year college? How do we get students on the proper class track, keep them there long enough yet move them along – and not let them spend too much precious time and financial aid money “swirling in a vortex”?</p> <p><b>Update</b> The FIG created a flow chart to give students a suggested path of classes for completing required courses for transfer. This visual aid helps students better understand the courses they need to take to transfer with an associate’s in business and helps business faculty better counsel students in their program.</p>
6.	Fernando AgudeloSilva – Biology - Earth and Life Science / Environmental Landscape Maula Allen – Math	<p><b>Inquiry question</b> Would a “just in time” math intervention presentation with worksheets on using proportions in lab samples and population lab exercises for Biology 110L students be successful in improving student performance?</p> <p><b>Update</b> The success of their collaboration in improving student success on a biology lab exercise with a “just in time” intervention, led the FIG members to propose a second FIG for spring, In this proposal, Maula and Fernando developed an online resource for biology lab students that would provide support for their studies.</p>

**Expenses:**

2 group leaders @ \$200	= \$400
5 team members @ \$150	= \$750
Stipend for Beth Patel 6 hrs. @ \$63.61	= \$381.66
Food for symposium	= \$129.08
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Total cost:	=\$1,660.74

Respectfully submitted by:

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Beth Patel

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Date

