Student Purpose: College-wide Summary Report

*The emerging idea*
- Students with some sense of their purpose in life and in college are more likely to be engaged, to learn and to succeed in college.

As a result of your discussions, what changes would your group suggest to the wording of the emerging big idea?

**East:** “Students with some sense of their purpose in life and in college are more likely to set goals, be engaged, learn, and accomplish their goals in college and in life.”

**Lake Nona:** “Successful students know their purpose and are more engaged learners.”

- Group felt that “sense of their purpose” was a weak statement and that was a huge target to hit. They wanted more precise language
- The statement should start with purpose
- Maybe starting with the end goal and building from there.
- May be the statement should also include stages to discovering purpose

**Osceola:** The group felt that the definition needs to be explicit and more intentional with the wording. For example, what is meant by “purpose” and “more likely”?

**11/16/12:**
- “Students who develop a sense of their purpose in life and college are more likely to be engaged, to learn, and to succeed in college and life.”
- “Student with a driven purpose in life and in college are more likely to set goals, to be engaged, to learn, and to accomplish their goals in college and in life.”

**How does a student develop purpose in life and in college?**

**Osceola:**
- It is a developmental process (6th Vector; Chickering)
- Develops within a social context and the student needs other skills prior to developing purpose.
- It is tied to value development and the identity process
- Students need to be exposed to differences and diverse viewpoints that is a part of a general education curriculum to develop purpose.
- Students need to see the larger picture and the relevance of learning (develop critical thinking) to develop purpose.
- It is developed in some cases as a reflective response to a personal crisis.
- Purpose develops in dialogue with others.
- Students develop purpose when they can clarify what they care about.
- Dualistic thinking impedes the development of purpose
- Declaring a major too soon impedes purpose.
- Understanding family and cultural values and relation of oneself to those values enhances the development of purpose especially since many of our students are not physically separated from their families.
- Spirituality and purpose are connected.

**West:**
- Seeking personal advice (from friends, family, favorite teachers, trusted advisors); self-exploration/reflection; Books/videos: RoadTrip Nation, 7 Habits…, What Color is my Parachute?; EXPERIENCE in elective courses.

**What role might technology play in helping students develop purpose?**

**East:**
- LifeMap expanded to documenting Purpose.
- Research Open courseware.
- Free/more resources for career placement, personality assessments, etc.
- What is already out there to help students search for purpose.
- Would be great to provide an electronic tool for high schools/non-traditional students, people coming back into college (life changes, life-long learning students) that would be already available for Purpose (Me In The Making 2.0).
- Mock lessons: Free account people can use to learn how to do online business with Valencia (applying, using Blackboard, registering for classes, etc).

**Lake Nona:**
- Atlas
- BlackBoard
- LifeMap
- Apps for mobile devices – Valencia pages
- **Need to be sure that faculty are aware of these resources and encourage students to use them.

**Osceola:**
- All of the LifeMap Tools (My Education Plan, My Career Planner, Me in the Making, My Portfolio)
- Online Advising
- Valencia website
- Faculty email
- Library Resources
- Classroom Technology
- Blackboard
- Online courses
- Social Media – could be helpful but may also serve as a distraction

West:
- Web-based skills assessment and job search

What impact might limited resources have on a student’s ability to find purpose”

East:
- Students who have parents who do not agree with their career desires, might get lost and not find their purpose. Valencia needs to treat parents/guardians as important resources for our students to get them on board with helping students finding THEIR purpose.
- Parents that are not supportive might hinder students from finding purpose.
- Isolated students (without a support system) might be hindered.
- Do we really give them the right resources?
- Childcare – Valencia should take a more active role in helping students find a safe environment for their children while the student is focused on college and finding their purpose. Do a better job at helping students find resources (211 website - http://211communityresources.org)

Lake Nona:
- The group does not believe this is a resource issue. One member shared that students form low SES backgrounds tend to have a limited world view and they would benefit from the college intentionally broadening their experiences and world view.

Osceola:
- First generation students
- No role models of college graduates in the family
- Students don’t know what to expect
- Lack of support for the time college students need to invest in studying
- Lack of knowledge of the hidden rules in college
  - Language/Culture limits
  - Learned helplessness
- Lack of child care
- Lack of mental health services
- Lack of transportation
- Cultural value of higher education

West:
- Minimal access to materials such as self-help books or reduced ability to explore the internet from home
- Problems for those NOT raised in a culture in which education and reading is encouraged and respected
- Would it be possible for Valencia to reduce tuition just for SLS course?

What would need to be different about the student experience at Valencia for more of our students to discover their purpose?

East:
- People (Staff, Faculty, Students, and Family) need to have buy-in to bringing up the discussion about Purpose.
- Students will need to chart different levels of purpose (purpose of taking classes; purpose of understanding and being involved in coursework; purpose of a career path; etc).
- Too much course content required pushes out opportunities to discuss student purpose (or instructor purpose).
- There has to be resources to send students to (like Open Houses; how to understand their own core values).
- More Project-Based learning opportunities for students.
- Help/encourage Valencia Employees find THEIR purpose! Support from supervisors to get involved in, ‘other duties at the college.’
- Realizing that Purpose can be something ever-changing/ developing for students. Not just a ‘fixed’ state.
- A First year experience needs to introduce the idea of Purpose and then embed/infuse it throughout many different opportunities at the college.
- Something free that the outside community can use to work on LifeMap before becoming a student (at Valencia).
- Students need to be able to know they have found their purpose once they find it (how do you know that you know your purpose?)
- Valencia needs to be open to different senses of purpose that might not meet the ‘typical model’
- Come up with a ‘Maslow Hierarchy of Needs’ for the Valencia student

Lake Nona:
- Student success: Goals paper with career exploration. Incorporate Road Trip Nation.
- Build relationships by offering networking events.
- Invite guest speakers – like the Road Trip Nation authors.
- Provide mentors that are specific to a career
- Have faculty share their own career exploration experiences – humanize the faculty and give examples.
- The college will need to be intentional on how it incorporates the discussion of purpose within the culture of Valencia.
The group believes that we are talking about purpose with our student but it is not explicit. Ideas shared include: connecting classroom work to purpose (ex. SPC1608 - speech on student purpose, ENC 1101 - writing prompt on what are their passion/what makes them come alive).

Attendee commented that right now Valencia’s offers so many options for students (ie. Course options) and students are overwhelmed. I more prescribed first year could better help students who are unsure of their purpose.

A conversation about embedding purpose into developmental courses; these students’ would most benefit identifying their purpose at this early stage because they will need the added motivation to propel them along their long academic journey.

Incorporating the topic of purpose into the LifeMap Faculty Certification. Include a statement about purpose into the course builder/syllabus of all courses or in key freshman courses.

The college would help student recognize that there is a difference between selecting a career and fulfilling your purpose (ex. Career choice - nursing; Purpose - serving people).

The college would provide students the opportunity of thinking outside of the box they are living in.

Including an interest inventory into the PERT test. Include this information on the student’s Orientation information sheet. OR Could be an assignment completed before the student attends orientation and beginning the dialog in orientation with students regarding purpose.

**Osceola:**
- Life skills course
- Prepare better for college (don’t have skills when graduate high school).
- Include life purpose as a written assignment.
- Help students set reasonable and realistic goals.
- Give students life experiences.
- Expand Life Development course (Bridges)
- Promote more service learning into courses during first year.
- Connect and reinforce classroom learning to life experiences,
- Rely more heavily on teaching critical thinking.
- Introduce student to multiple forms of purpose.

**West:**
- Improve My Career Builder (provide training and links to Monster.com, Salary.com); infuse LifeMap into all introductory courses.
- Create more and deeper access to books, workshops, reading circles hosted by advisors/faculty

**Recurring Themes**

1. Students need student success skills
   a. Provide first-time college students access to a student success course.
b. Infuse student success skills into all introductory and dev ed courses
c. Teach students to discover their purpose; both life and college. And, make them aware that there are multiple purposes in life.
d. Students want to discover their purpose early in their college career.
e. Teach students how to be college students (i.e. Study skills, time management, social, work, etc.)
f. Offer career exploration opportunities to all students

2. Students need a mentor or advisor to help them discover their purpose(s).

3. Infuse LifeMap across the curriculum and teach students how to apply it and offer opportunities for them to use it.