MyMAP

MyMAP is a philosophy, and like every philosophy it is a guide; for both students and educators. For students, it describes the journey that should be pursued in order to see the end goal, avoid risks and “rabbit holes,” and ensure a pathway to the desired career, either directly from the Alamo Colleges or following completion of the baccalaureate degree. For educators, MyMAP helps us focus on each component part in order to continuously improve the whole student experience, and increase student success.

Like any sound philosophy, there are principles that explain MyMAP. They include:

1. The journey is clear, well structured, and has a precise “end in mind” for each student;
2. In addition to continuous engagement with students, there are milestones that reinforce and refine the journey for each student:
   a. By the 15th hour, students declare a career goal and academic path (already Board policy);
   b. By the 30th hour, students declare their intended transfer college or university;
      i. If a student is pursuing a career immediately, we ensure by the 30th hour that the student is building his/her portfolio and resume;
   c. By the 45th hour, students refine their pathway to ensure continued alignment with career goal and transfer institution’s requirements;
      i. We ensure continued alignment, progress, and preparedness for the student’s desired academic pathway, career and anticipated interviews. We also ensure the student is current on new technologies or requirements, and validate the leadership skills employers want.
3. For educators, each milestone is an opportunity to celebrate, guide, reinforce, and refine as the student progresses, matures, reevaluates and deals with all of life’s challenges.

When many of us attended college/university, the legal concept of *In Loco Parentis* dominated higher education’s philosophy. The university had legal responsibility for the student while he or she was under the institution’s care and influence. For example, women students were required to be in the dorms by 10:30 pm on weekdays, 12 am on Fridays, and 1 am on Saturdays. Men, on the other hand, had no curfew! My generation, fighting in Vietnam, saw the hypocrisy in both this double standard and in 18 year olds being drafted to fight, but legally unable to vote. Thus, the whole *In Loco Parentis* philosophy collapsed. **Students are now considered adults, and responsible for themselves.**

I’m not advocating in any way to reinstate *In Loco Parentis*. But as the first in my family to attend college, like our first-generation and first time in college students today, I depended solely on the faculty, staff, and institution to guide me, nurture me, and ensure my academic success. They were my “acting parents”. This is what MyMAP is intended to do.

Today, our students, many of them first-generation college goers, are trying to balance family, friends, home, work, and the day-to-day exigencies of life, and need a strong, caring, knowing college family upon which to depend; who will effectively guide them. As a result, we have the moral obligation to ensure we effectively, properly, intellectually, honestly, maturely, and with rigor and high standards create the environment our students need to succeed.

Listening attentively to our five Student Trustee candidates last week inspired all present by their stories. Several candidates indicated they had overcome difficult home environments, and loved the Alamo Colleges. But the comment that inspired us the most was exactly the philosophical underpinning of MyMAP that must engage every one of us across the Alamo Colleges Family for us to have the positive impact our students require. The phrase was “Feeling at Home.” Several candidates spoke about how welcoming, supportive, and safe they felt, preferring to be here rather than at home. This must be the philosophical strength of
MyMAP and of the Alamo Colleges. “Being at home” is the environment we must create for every student and certainly for every employee.

I urge us all to strive diligently to create the “Home” environment that will welcome every student, praise every student’s progress, and, together, guide every student on the correct pathway to completion, transfer through university and to the desired career and leadership roles our community is calling for us to provide.

So welcome home everyone.