

## TRANSCRIPT

## Counseling for Student Educational Planning: Programs and Strategies – Remarks

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[Title Slide: *Counseling for Student Educational Planning: Programs and Strategies*]

MARY RAUNER

So, before we break for lunch, I'm pleased to introduce Denise Noldon to share a few comments with us. Dr. Noldon currently serves as the Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Services and Special Programs at the Chancellor's Office, and her extensive experience in higher education includes work in the community college and CSU systems in California and Maryland. She's been a vocational counselor, a mentor coordinator for multiethnic student education, a director for Upward Bound, a researcher, a dean of counseling and matriculation, a vice president of student development, and just prior to joining the Chancellor's Office, the President of Contra Costa College. I want to especially thank Dr. Noldon for her commitment to this effort; she flew all the way down to Southern California to meet with our group there, and she is super busy and was still able to come this morning. So thank you so much for being here.

DENISE NOLDON

Well good afternoon, I should say—yesterday it was morning—and it's interesting because I have today the pleasure of having had the experience at least for part of the day at Norco for their...the presentations that were done there. So probably I'm going to flip-flop and see the presentations I missed, you know, today, and so that's a good thing.

But let me just say what a pleasure it is to be before the group that I probably feel most connected to, because not only was I a vocational counselor...I did counseling with EOP at two different CSUs and I was a counselor while I was coordinating the EOPS and the community colleges, and also I did adjunct counseling work in the state of Maryland, and I have a degree in counseling, so that's how I got into the community colleges. I'm probably one of the few people that have their community college counseling credential when you used to be able to get it with twelve years—are there any other people in the room that have those? Oh, okay, good, good; I'm in good company.

So such a pleasure to be here with you; it's a pleasure to be at the Chancellor's Office working in student services at this time. I have to say that my staff is propping me up, you know,

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they're getting me up to speed so that I can do this work. But I think more importantly, I'm working on behalf of all of the folks that work in student services statewide. Having a field experience in this job I think is essential, so I'm really happy to bring that perspective to the work that we're doing. We're all working as a team to sort of acquaint each other with sort of a...what is it? How do things translate out in the field? And also, you know, from a policy and political and legislative perspective how these things play out. So a lot of times we're the middle between what the field wants and what the legislature wants.

Let me tell you what the legislature wants, because you guys know what the field wants, right? The legislature wants to see that the SSSP and the student equity programs and plans are being enacted, and that they're going to see a difference tomorrow. So our job is to help them to understand that we are thoughtful, we're thorough, we are certainly supporters of student success, so you have to give us the opportunity to do this work and to do this work in the best possible way; it does not happen overnight. We didn't get to be a system that was focused on how many people that got through the door as opposed to how many people finish. This just didn't start—you've been funding us like this for forever. So naturally it is a cultural shift, and thank you. I always know that counselors are going to set me up, so that's really good...the whole piece about talking about a shift in the cultural context in the work that we do.

And for counselors, I think it's extremely important that you understand that you're at the vanguard, you're going to have to be the people that help to facilitate the conversations and the dialogues, because you get this in a way that no other group I think involved in this work gets it. And I'm glad they called you out in the SSSP and said that "these funds need to be spent on counseling." And had I known what the presentation was going to be about the career piece—who did the career? Right, Brook—I would have said yesterday, because my comments came before your presentation, that career counseling is counseling. And I'm sorry that you had to have that debate with people, because you all have a guide, a white paper for a lack of a better way of describing it, that talks about the role of counselors, right? The academic senate produced it. Is career counseling listed there?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Yes.

DENISE NOLDON

Why did we have to have an argument or debate about that? So I'm sorry I wasn't there because I probably would have carried that argument. But anyway, yes, career counseling is a part of the counseling that needs to be done to make this whole thing work. We would like as an outcome for all of our students to pick a career and love what they do and go out there; imagine what our world would look like if we had people that were going to jobs every day and love what they do. But I think what counselors understand more importantly than anything else is, we've got to love our students, too, you know? Our students have told us in no uncertain terms that the kinds of environments that they thrive in are environments where they know that people care about them. You're going to nudge them in a really good way, in a positive

way to achieve their goals and you're going to be there for them when they trip up along the way. And who knows that work better than us, right? Than counselors.

So part of what I get to do is to advocate on behalf of what you do, and there are a whole bunch of other things that I get to do so I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about some of the other efforts that we are engaged in at the Chancellor's Office. We have a number of initiatives that are out there where your role in the dialogue and the vetting of how these initiatives play out is extremely important. So I hope that many of you are involved in some of these efforts.

We have...someone talked about technology this morning and the importance of that. I think it's really important to understand that at a lot of the work, or at the foundation of a lot of the work that's being done, is the technology piece. And I'm really happy that, instead of me as...when I was a vice president—a discipline officer having to discipline students for using their smart phones, you know, perhaps inappropriately in class and all of that—that someone decided that that was an essential communication device to use to reach out to students. Imagine what might happen if people looked at it that way as opposed to a nuisance, because we know that our students are kind of...there's an invisible wire there with our students and those phones are walking around and bumping into walls and texting and all of that.

So I'm really happy, and one of the great things about Brook's presentation and...who did the other presentation?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Jerilyn.

DENISE NOLDON

Jerilyn—these are the kinds of things that we're going to be able to take to the legislature when we're talking to the legislature about what we're doing. So we finally have some materials because they want to see, they want to know what we're doing. And the kind of efforts that you all are engaged in at your campuses—and I'm sure there are many others—are what we're going to be able to stand on when we ask for continued resource support funding for these programs. The revenue that's generated in the state is significantly more than what was even predicted in January, so we have a really good feeling about getting more resources to do this work.

So the fact that we're being offered MAP, you know, statewide, perhaps people can connect the dots and say, "Well, maybe we can hire people to help us to maintain the infrastructure so we can use that wonderful tool you've created." So the technology piece is really important; many of you are working in Ellucian products or Banner or PeopleSoft and all the work that's being done around that. It's too bad we didn't get to see the Sac City and the Los Rios ISEP because they've done a great job with that. But technology is going to be a very, very critical piece to all of this.

And pretty soon we probably won't be doing handwritten ed plans anymore, right? Because, you know, nobody wants to have to go and defend that kind of thing. So part of what...I mean, I know there are probably still a few people out there that would still like to write out an ed plan but, frankly, you know, I think those days are just about over. So I want to encourage you all to be mindful of the fact that while the SSSP funding is narrowly supportive of certain kinds of things based on what it used to support, then you have a lot more resources to apply to technology solutions, counseling solutions, assessment solutions, and the like. And if and when you're not being heard...because certainly I talked to the CIOs last Friday, prior to that I talked to the CSSOs, and we're out there telling them. And we're going to try to get in to talk to the CBOs—they don't really necessarily want us to come talk to them—but we're...we've heard some things out in the field about the inability to leverage these funds in a way that is going to help you to achieve these goals that we have for our students. And so part of what we're doing is trying to help them to understand, you know, this is not money that you need to keep in the bank, folks. We want you to spend all of it because more is coming. And we've even extended the amount of time that you have to spend those funds. So part of what you want to do is to make sure that you're working closely with staff and faculty, finding those solutions on campus.

The good thing about being able to travel back and forth around the state—well, there are some bad things, too, and I'm a little tired, but they didn't tell me about that part of the job—but the good thing is that I get to see all of these wonderful things that people are doing around student equity and so whenever I go some place I try to build in some time to go on a campus and talk to people and look and see how happy the students look, and see how engaged they are. Just saw a wonderful example of that at the Center for Student Success at the Norco campus. I thought, "What kind of a mindset does that put a student in when they walk on campus?" They say, "Wow, there's a Center for Student Success. These people don't want me to fail," right? I mean, so these are the kinds of things that, you know...these are things that sometimes I think we think they have a, you know, they make an impact on students. But I think that, you know, long term you guys are probably...you won't be in any better position than where you are today to use these resources to leverage the work that you do. So, you know, definitely the technology...talked a little bit about the culture change and it's definitely a paradigm shift, right?

We're blazing new trails here. Now I know that some of us want to hold on to some of those sacred Cal kinds of things that we've done historically, but this is an opportunity to be innovative and to use these funds to do some things; that maybe you've been told you can't do that because there aren't enough funds. Well, folks, there are enough funds now. So what I want to encourage you to do...because some people are saying, "Well, I don't even know how much money our college got, I've never seen a plan," you know. These things are public documents, so if a member of the public can request your college to provide that to them, you certainly can request that you be alerted to how that plan was written—hopefully you participated in the process—and that you have access to some of the resources because you are central to a lot of the work around not only SSSP but student equity as well.

Some of the new initiatives...I saw some of the institutional effectiveness folks here earlier...there she is, slumped down in her chair back there, our Vice Chancellor of Institutional Effectiveness... We are working—Teresa Tanner—we are working with Teresa’s area to really try to leverage and collaborate the resources that we have so that we can provide the best possible way to get information out to you, to help you to grapple with some of the situations that you might be facing on your campuses so that you all can produce programs that produce good outcomes for students. And so we’re committed at the State Chancellor’s Office to use the institutional effectiveness pathway to do that. Are you going to talk to them a little bit about it?

TERESA TANNER

No, I was just...I’m observing.

DENISE NOLDON

She’s just observing, okay, well, you guys probably should hear from her because she’s got—she’s got money. And she’s certainly going to be willing to work with colleges, institutions, who have a need for a team of people to come in and help with certain things. And so we’re going to be collaborating around some of those efforts and so certainly don’t forget that she’s got money.

Okay, but there’s the baccalaureate degree—some of you may be at campuses that have the baccalaureates—and so what does that mean in terms of how we advise those students, how we counsel those students? Is that different, is it the same? What kind of different kinds of requirements are going to be put in place? The whole prerequisite situation, there are just a lot around the baccalaureate. We’re working...we will be working closely with the colleges who are selected to make sure that the student services side is addressed in terms of what happens for those students. So some of you on those campuses may be involved in that. But it is definitely an exciting time that we are now in the realm where we can provide baccalaureate degree access for our students.

There’s an inmate education initiative; we’re going to be providing programs to currently incarcerated students. There’s going to be a pilot around that; those students need services. So we also are going to need to hear from counselors in terms of how we can deliver those services to folks who are currently incarcerated. We also have a number of other...the student success initiative that we have—there’s a number of other initiatives, but I guess...so that I can wrap up because somebody really smart told me not to stand between lunch and, you know, my presentation. So I want to wrap this up and also maybe give you time to ask a couple of questions, but this is really an exciting time and I see—and perhaps I’m biased because, you know, I’m a counselor—I see that counselors are so critical to these dialogues that are taking place so please, please, please, you know, unchain yourself from your desk because I know how important it is for you to be there to advise students, but a lot of the tools that you’re creating can do some of that work for you, not all of it, but some of that work. And then it frees you up to participate in these very important dialogues that need to be occurring on our campuses.

And so I just want to encourage you all to do that, think broadly about the work that you do; don't try to think narrowly about it, think broadly about it. And think about the ways in which you're going to be able to touch students literally and figuratively through the special lens that you look at them with, because it's going to be important to all of the initiatives that we're working on that you are at the center of those dialogues. So I want to thank you so much for the work that you do every day on behalf of our students. This is largely—the agenda that we're standing on—is largely driven by the economic agenda the state has, okay? The state has an economic agenda here; they want us to produce more people to be out there in the workforce to take positions. So even though it's not sort of like benevolent legislatures wanting to see more students, you know, be successful in college, we have to embrace it because I don't think that we'll ever get an opportunity like this, at least in my lifetime, again. So are there any questions that anyone has?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

I just have a suggestion: one of the things that I know has been helpful for me is to be able to connect with—I'm the Vice President of Student Services—to connect with other colleagues. And it would be really good for the Chancellor's Office to host an event—I know we have all directors training for admissions and records, all directors training for DSPS—but it would be great just to get counselors in the same room so that they could have cross dialogue. I know we have a RP group and we're trying to send our counseling staff to a lot of professional developments, but it would be really good for them to hear...all of our counseling staff to hear from you and listen to what you have to say. So that's just a suggestion to...

[Slide: Screenshot of *Homepage, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office*]

DENISE NOLDON

Thank you for that, I understand that you're...you had a statewide organization of counselors that's being reactivated; is that...does any...is anyone aware of that?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

4CA.

DENISE NOLDON

Yeah, 4CA.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Trying.

[Slide: Screenshot of *Welcome Page, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office*]

DENISE NOLDON

Trying? Try hard. Try hard because that's where you can get us to do the same thing that we do for the other constituency groups. So once you do that then you just invite us; we'll come. But

in the absence of that, we are also going to be doing a lot more training in the field just around SSSP and providing technical support. But I like the idea of getting, you know, likeminded people all in the room together, but also I will say that on a lot of the groups that I've talked to, counselors have been in the room. The question is: what's the communication vehicle to get the word back to your peers, you know? So counselors are present but, you know...maybe technology is an answer in terms of how to get some of those things out to you. Maybe the 4CA can, you know, put together some type of online communication piece or something like that. But, you know, let us know when you guys get it together and we'll show up. But other than that, if there's something specific that you think that we can be helpful with, please don't hesitate to give me a call, okay?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

I'm just curious if the state is working on integrating the student success plan with the equity plan; more integration between...

DENISE NOLDON

No, that's your job. Uh uh, we're not doing that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

We're working on that but whether we make that template would become one in the future...

DENISE NOLDON

No, no, because SSSP is a little—a lot—more narrowly focused; student equity is institution-wide. You know, student equity gives you an opportunity to say on your campus that, "On our campus the student equity plan subsumes our SSSP plan," even though...and, you know, and are like, you know—it's not that way actually because SSSP funds student equity. I mean, that's...the Student Success Act funded all that. So, no, we probably won't be bringing those two together at least in my tenure because we see them as being two separate and distinct, but also integrated, efforts on your part, and you really don't want to mix up what you have—the allowable spending that you can do with student equity with SSSP—because it's not the same and that's what we have to really break people of because some people for their SSSP plan they gave us their student equity plan. When you read it, it reads like a student equity plan because they want to spend the money on things that probably could be funded out of student equity—that's probably one of the more prevalent things that we say in the feedback—that's really probably more inclined to be funded out of student equity as opposed to SSSP.

So the expenditure guidelines were probably a bit too vague for some but some just didn't read them, frankly, and they just put the wrong, you know, effort in the wrong plan. So I don't think that that's something that we're going to be moving towards because we see them as being distinct enough not to combine them. But I would say that...I think it was at Santiago Canyon the VP there told me—VPSS—told me that they brought all their plans to their first meeting and they just laid them out and they did a crosswalk. You know, you can disengage that when you submit your plans to us, but certainly on campus it may be seamless, some of the work that

you're doing. Does that answer...? Okay, anybody else? Okay, great. Well, thanks for inviting me.

MARY RAUNER

Thank you so much.