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Colorado Mountain College: Implement an Effective Leadership & Communication System to Become a High Performance Organization

- PROJECT
- UPDATE
- REVIEW

REVIEWED

 **VERSION 1.0**

Create a new version of this Action Project.

Project Details			
Title	Implement an Effective Leadership & Communication System to Become a High Performance Organization		Status REVIEWED
Category	5-Leading and Communicating		Updated 09-14-2010
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VERSIONS

 **VERSION 1.0**

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: CMC is still in its first of a three year implementation of this project. Based on feedback from AQIP and the leadership's knowledge of CMC, the college has been following through on addressing areas related to leading and communicating at its leadership and other meetings, with the leadership then working with its respective staff members to improve communication college wide. A Quality Team was formed following the last strategy forum to help lead and further continuous improvement of college wide processes and ensure greater consistency. The team oversees16 AQIP teams that have been targeting key college wide processes for improvement, e.g. new program development, program review, marketing, teaching and learning and these teams have added sub teams when needed. Documents reflecting the progress of these teams are available under the AQIP tab of the CMC portal. The involvement of employees on teams has led to at least 150 employees (up 50% from last year) who have been trained in continuous improvement tools and are applying these tools daily. Twenty faculty were trained in continuous improvement methodology last May by the President and many of them served on the AQIP teams over the summer. Information regarding continuous improvement, particularly as it relates to assessment, was communicated by the leadership at faculty in-services, the Learning for Leaders program sessions and other key meetings or trainings.

We are also a part of Strategic Horizons which is a consortium of community colleges that share best practices several times a year, including visits to top performing organizations. Strategic Horizons has assisted us with building capacity, improving sustainability and will help us with organizational design next month. The President and other leaders

attended the Continuous Quality Improvement Network Institute this summer and several of the staff also attended the Institutional Effectiveness Institute. The information from these institutes will help CMC make even greater progress with continuous improvement and will be shared with leadership this fall.

The Quality Inventory from P. Lencioni's book (that became a common reader for the leadership), the Quality Infrastructure Inventory recommended from the 2009 Strategy Forum, the Chronicle's Great College's to Work For 2010 Survey and our annual Employee Survey were conducted with the employees over the past year. The two inventories were conducted with the President's Direct Reports and the results suggested that although CMC has good leaders who are committed to student and employee success, there continues to be a need for greater accountability, especially in how well we communicate and use data for further improvement. These data were shared and utilized by the leadership to target improvements in the area of communication at every opportunity. The results of the Chronicle survey of CMC employees indicated that while job satisfaction, professional development, compensation & benefits, facilities and supervisors were "good", pride was "very good to excellent", shared governance and communication were a relative weakness for the college compared to peer colleges. The CMC annual Employee Survey is currently underway, but the 2005 through 2009 data (available on the portal under the AQIP tab) from this survey that is based on the AQIP categories shows how we have improved across all of the categories since 2008 and are making good progress on our continuous improvement journey. Based on this survey, communication and planning continuous improvement continue to be a relative challenge for the college. Consequently, additional items related to improving communication were added to the 2010 survey.

In addition to the portal as a means of communication (including a faculty portal), training in and use of our Interactive Video System (IVS), Blackboard and Elluminate were encouraged over the past year. Adjunct faculty, assessment, human resources, campus newsletters, etc. helped disseminate information as well. The college wide balanced score card that was developed for 2009-10 has been key to measuring our progress at the end of each semester on indicators of success related to our students (e.g. course success, retention, satisfaction), employees (e.g. job satisfaction, professional development, turnover), partnerships (e.g. number of educational & business partnerships) and fiscal responsibility (e.g. revenue, expenditures, reserve percentages). The balanced score card is available on the AQIP pages of our main website and also with greater detail and links to supporting data on the Institutional Research and AQIP portal pages. We think that the balanced score card will increasingly make us become more transparent with how we assess ourselves and how we use data for continuous improvement. We are in the process of more closely tying the 2010 and beyond balanced score card to our vision, mission and values, which in turn, are reflected in our strategic planning and budgeting processes. We have begun developing functional area and campus score cards utilizing the college wide template. As campuses and functional areas begin to drill down on any over or underperforming college wide key performance indicators, the employees are able to examine the data and identify actions that can be taken to improve performance as needed, e.g. actions related to student

success, particularly in Developmental Education or barrier classes such as Math 121. This cascading effect of the score card will help us to become more proactive with using data for planning improvement. The Business Office and Student Affairs have developed the best examples of this already. The Business Office score card drills down to the employee level and the Student Affairs one measures key indicators of student progress that are based on the department's Assessment in Three Dimensions Model. TaskStream has been implemented to help capture assessment data, increase accountability, transparency and improvements to learning that are based on that data.

All areas and campuses will have been trained in and will be applying the zero-based budgeting process by the end of this academic year. The process was developed after an AQIP team examined the traditional budgeting process at the college and developed a zero-based budgeting process, which should help the college increase accountability and fiscal responsibility.

**R:** The formation of a Quality Team to help lead and further continuous improvement of college-wide processes and ensure greater consistency was a major step in achieving your goal. Establishing numerous AQIP teams targeting key college-wide processes for improvement has involved many of the stakeholder groups in new program development, program review, marketing, teaching and learning. The involvement of many more employees on teams has increased dramatically the number of individuals on the campus who have been trained with continuous improvement tools and are applying these tools daily. Communicating information regarding continuous improvement, particularly as it relates to assessment, at faculty in-services, the Learning for Leaders program sessions and other key meetings or trainings has further emphasized the importance and value that the institution places on this concept. Visits to top performing Participating in Strategic Horizons has further emphasized the commitment the institution has to building capacity, improving sustainability and to overall organizational design. Attendance at various Institutes focusing on institutional effectiveness and quality improvement will help the college make even greater progress with continuous improvement. Recognition of the need to communicate and use data for further improvement is an important step in addressing the identified challenge of communication and planning continuous improvement. The use of the balanced score card will make the processes of how you assess yourselves and use data for continuous improvement transparent especially when it is tied to the vision, mission and values of the institution. With the transparency that these actions provide, employees can identify actions that they can take to address the areas that surface.

**2: Institution Involvement**

**A:** A shared vision and mission i.e. to create better futures for our students, communities, our partners and our team members has been the driving force for increasing involvement. The President and others have communicated this purpose and continuous improvement philosophy at numerous gatherings over the past year to get employees to focus on

their role in the college's progress with its vision and mission. Employee goals were tied to the strategic plan and balanced score card. The college plans to base pay for performance on college wide progress with the key performance indicators of the score card. Employee orientation introduces new employees to the "CMC Way" and the college's vision, mission and values. This orientation will prove helpful as we fill current and future vacancies and allow for smoother successions. The Quality Team has increased employee engagement with process improvement. A large cross-section of employees attended the First Year Experience Conference and have been applying what they learned. Our Community College Survey of Student Engagement data demonstrate how well we compare to cohort colleges on the five benchmarks and are indicative of our progress with creating an environment for student success. Other examples of involvement are represented in our engagement and accountability AQIP projects and the close collaboration amongst Student Affairs Council, Instructional Leadership Team and the Joint Leadership Team has led to greater emphasis on sharing assessment best practices, data and continuous improvement methods with faculty and staff.

**R:** It is apparent that the entire college community has embraced the concept of continuous improvement. Linking employee goals with the overall college's strategic plan and the balanced score card visibly demonstrate the commitment of the institution to continuous improvement from the top down. Placing the college's progress on key performance indicators as a determinant used in compensation stresses the importance of these issues to the entire college and improvement on these key indicators is everyone's responsibility. (Category 5: Leading and Communicating; Category 4: Valuing People; Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs).

**3: Next Steps**

**A:** We will continue to monitor our progress and determine areas to improve using the surveys outlined above, TaskStream and the college's balanced score card. The President will continue to lead process improvement and train employees to apply its methods in their daily work and will be placing greater emphasis on accountability, especially with the leadership. We have developed a "Shared Leadership Model" that will help us further address communication, accountability, using data for decision-making and encourage greater collaboration. As the college undergoes leadership turnover and related structural changes, we hope to implement this model, including clear expectations of employees and increasing our focus to become more strategic with our actions. The 2011-2014 strategic planning process will involve all constituents over the next year in determining what is most important to the college's future.

Our IVS communication system will be improved over the coming year to allow for greater connectivity with employees and students across our disparate locations, especially during inclement weather. An electronic process improvement form developed via the Quality Team will be shared by the President with leadership next week and is available on the AQIP tab of our portal. The form will be utilized to track college wide continuous improvement efforts that can then be incorporated into our

Systems Portfolio.

**R:** The development of a "Shared Leadership Model" to address communication and accountability and encourage greater collaboration demonstrates the commitment the institution has to continued process improvement. The proposed all inclusive strategic planning process again illustrates the commitment that the institution has to leading and communicating its vision and goals to all stakeholders and employees (Category 5: Leading and Communicating). It is obvious that the institution has established a very well organized plan to achieve the goals of this Action Plan over the next year.

**4: Resulting Effective Practices**

**A:** The Assessment in Three Dimensions Model, Quality Team, balanced score card and TaskStream are proving to be instrumental in really changing our culture to one of inquiry and evidence building. The Shared Leadership Model is about to be more fully implemented and we expect it to also help us achieve our mission and vision, as well as better realize our core values.

**R:** The institution has developed numerous effective instruments and practices that have aided in changing the culture to one of inquiry and evidence building. The all-inclusive nature of the process that was followed in developing these tools has helped emphasize that communication and collaboration among all constituencies and stakeholders is essential to the success of this Action Project and are examples to other institutions on how to create and all inclusive environment to bring the entire community together, moving in one direction.

**5: Project Challenges**

**A:** Communicating results on the college's progress and decision-making to all employees (as well as to students and the greater community) continues to be challenging across our locations. The emphasis on accountability should help improve this. Focusing on what is most important to the college instead of too many things also continues to be a challenge. As we work on our 2011-2014 strategic plan over the next year, we hope to increase this focus through increased involvement and a collective identification of what is really most important to the college. Also as the balanced score card is further developed and used, it should help increase transparency and focus on what really matters to CMC's constituents.

Turnover and changing organizational structure and fluctuating reporting relationships may also be more challenging than anticipated. As a result, effective communication, accountability and keeping the momentum of data based decision-making through college-wide efforts may have their challenges. However, the president has laid out his expectations of employees, especially the leadership, that should help mitigate these challenges. Amidst any challenges we might encounter, we will continue

to communicate at every opportunity using multiple methods of communication, particularly via the methods employees tell us they prefer most.

**R:** Increasing involvement in the strategic planning initiative across all stakeholder groups will help the college to focus on what is collectively identified as initiatives that are important to the life of the institution. With the shift from administrative decision making to community decision making the college will face some challenges. It is apparent that you are aware of these challenges and are implementing mechanisms such as the Balanced Scorecard and developing a close collaboration amongst the Student Affairs Council, the Instructional Leadership Team and the Joint Leadership Team that emphasizes sharing assessment best practices, data and continuous improvement methods with faculty and staff. In addition the development of a strategic planning process that involves all constituents over the next year in determining what is most important to the college's future are all promotes community ownership of each initiative and should allow for the college to be less susceptible to turnover and organizational structure changes in the years to come. Your institution is making reasonable progress toward completion of the project and especially on developing an institution-wide continuous quality improvement culture.