

Learning Dialogs II: Ongoing Conversations on How to Become More Learning Centered

During the spring semester of 2006, a series of learning dialogs were held to discuss our progress in becoming a learning college and to envision next steps. The format for the dialogs was slightly different this year, focusing on what is best about CPCC. Appreciative Inquiry, a change management tool which focuses on possibilities and builds on the strengths of past and present, was used to help guide the dialogs. Using basic techniques of Appreciative Inquiry, the facilitators engaged participants in the following manner:

- **Reflection on and appreciation of what we have accomplished**
 - What have you done to promote learning for yourself or your co-workers or students?
- or**
- What have you experienced or seen done at the College that is very learning centered?
- **It is now 2010 and CPCC has made the headlines in the Chronicle for Higher Education as a premiere learning college. How did we get there? (4 headlines for discussion- reverse engineering)**
 - Student success in their first five classes up from 50% to 96%
 - 100% of CPCC exiters state that they met their educational goals
 - CPCC scores highest in country on CCSSE (community college survey of student engagement)
 - CPCC renowned for promoting professional development for all its employees in the true spirit of a learning college
- **Moving forward**
 - Where do we go next?

Comments and recommendations in response to the four headlines are listed below:

Bulleted items in red were mentioned on several occasions.

How can we help our students become more engaged?

Research indicates that students who feel a part of the college are more likely to be retained

- More interactive time with instructors
- Remove barriers to learning (facility, parking, hot/cold rooms, etc)
- Daycare facility on campus
- Tuition reimbursement
- Meet students before they begin / Orientation and/or open house

- Peer mentor program
- Service Learning opportunities
- Institute a Learning College Hour: 1 hour/week of activity/advisement to promote co-curricular activities and student interaction with faculty and staff
- Market CPCC as a learning college to general public
- Transfer accessibility to 4 yr. college on CPCC campus
- Student Ambassador program (tuition reimbursement) Implement service learning in all curriculum areas (credit and scholarship dollars)
- Energized program that focuses on one high needs community (adopting a community)
- Spotlight on learning – success stories of students
- More scholarships
- Project support / study groups in classes – provide more explicit encouragement to form study groups.
- Room available /more wireless areas
- Athletic programs
- Help students understand possible reasons to stay past associate's degree
- Students co-teach ACA classes
- Open door? Placement scores. Let's be careful not to encourage students to enroll in classes where they don't have the background. If you can't read, maybe you should not be taking reading-intensive classes.

- What are first 5 classes a student should take? If we know what classes most new-to-college students need, could we guarantee a schedule so that they don't end up taking classes for which they are unprepared?
- Career Fair – students see how what they are doing in the classroom relates to career goals.

How can we help our students meet their educational goals?

- Poll students to see if they are reaching their goals / review each semester to see of goals have changed and are they obtaining goals
- Assessment of student goals / were they met?
- Creation of learning development plan for all program students.
- Required orientation for all p/t faculty
- Help students to set goals / Help students identify what may be their own risk factors that may inhibit them reaching goals
- Tracking drop-outs to see what happened, why did they leave? Use that information to establish retention initiatives where appropriate.
- Ample faculty and staff
- Registration and all communication is user friendly
- 24 hour support for students-use pop ups and online chat – our students operate in a 24/7 world and their needs to often conform to our 8-5 schedules.

- Developmental students and undeclared and CCE receive counseling-commit resources to make this happen
- Give full support to part time faculty (copy cards, contact for emergency info.)
We can not succeed without them but we provide little support.
- Every campus has an evening director. We have huge numbers of evening students and often the evening director might be the only administrator available at night to assist students.
- Bookstore is open and books are available – needs resources
- Online support for students – tutoring
- Better signage – everywhere
- Work with employers to support their employees attending class
- More short session classes
- Student success day
- CPCC community involvement
- At risk referral system
- Student Success Center located at each campus
- Access to more grant money for “working poor”
- More peer to peer teaching
- Alternative methods of payment
- Graduate has knowledge and skills to get employed – portfolio to display how student has mastered program competencies.

Once they get here, how do we help our students be successful?

- Fear of losing FTE should be replaced by desire for student success and retention
- Mandatory placement based on test scores
- Student mentor program
- Early identification and intervention for “at risk students”
- Required orientation / replication of title three project larger scale
- Student empowerment / add students to learning dialogues
- Offer more new programs (variety) Interdisciplinary
- Return to suggested course sequence
- More proactive in communicating with absent students
- Student self identify their goals
- Required ACA for “new” 1st time students
- Computer assessment test for new students. Then provide tutoring or training on how to use technology - especially students taking online courses. It is hard to be successful if you can utilize the technology resources available.
- Understanding various learning styles and more classes accommodate for those styles
- Good assessment of current skills
- Comprehensive assessment for ALL courses
- Develop student learning communities to support classroom learning and networking
- Promotion and marketing of student resources and options available to ensure success.
- Clean and safe learning environment

- Institute problem based learning / move away from chalk to talk
- Advising students becomes personal responsibility of division directors and faculty
- Encourage innovation through stipends / release for faculty
- Accept student success as a core mission for everyone
- Core Competencies (abilities) communicated and measured
- Keep up with latest technology – training and supply
- Quality tutor program with trained tutors available day and night
- Look at college from students perspective
- Recognize undecided students – offer help

How can we help our own employees develop as professionals?

- More opportunities for upward mobility. Not everyone wants to be an administrator but they do want to move up and take on new responsibilities and challenges. (career plans)
- Tuition reimbursement
- More \$ for employees to attend conferences and an easier process to get that money.
- Hire BIG name trainers for staff / good turn out, good publicity
- Options for training online / good to target all learning styles

- Targeted professional development tied to individual career goals, departmental needs, and college plans (PDP)
- Offer telecommuting option when appropriate
- Wellness activities offered when faculty/staff can attend
- Peer review, especially with faculty. This can help create a more collegial atmosphere.
- Make it easier for retirees to teach/work here (golden handshakes)
- Newspaper promotions of accomplishments
- Focus on classified staff / Do more “PD” for classified staff
- Competencies for staff
- Skill based assessment when hiring
- Virtual / web based meetings
- Learning College “think tank” / facilitate with representatives from many schools moving towards being learning colleges
- Survey courses in state of the art instructional methods

