

Support Services Review

Office of Professional Development & Evaluation

January 2011

- 1. What are the primary services or outcomes provided by the support service area and what is the impact of those services and outcomes on students and other key stakeholders?**

The primary services and impact of those services is addressed in the Mission and Goals of the department:

The success of students at Austin Community College is due in large part to the efforts of the institution's faculty and staff. Thus, having skilled, knowledgeable, and well-trained employees is essential at ACC. In order to ensure that ACC has the highly productive and efficient faculty and staff required for student success, the Professional Development Office encourages and supports the continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills by all ACC employees by coordinating and providing professional development opportunities.

Goals

1. Coordinate the professional development process, resources, and activities, incorporating recommendations from the Professional Development Committee and other college-wide groups.
2. Ensure that appropriate professional development opportunities exist to support the four categories of professional development established by the Professional Development Committee: general work environment, ACC job requirements, job-specific knowledge/skills, and personal development.

3. Design and disseminate a variety of professional development resources in a variety of delivery modalities.
4. Design and offer leadership development and succession opportunities for all ACC employees.
5. Develop external relationships and funding that support professional development initiatives and operations.
6. Collaborate with the Faculty & Staff Evaluation processes and Human Resources to ensure an effective, integrated system of professional development and evaluation.
7. Ensure that sufficient professional development opportunities and resources are available to enable employee compliance with professional development policies and procedures as outlined in the College's Administrative Rule.
8. Maintain the Workshop and Event Registration Database.
9. Facilitate the dissemination of information about and the availability of resources to support departmentally-sponsored professional development opportunities.
10. Evaluate the effectiveness of activities and opportunities offered by the Professional Development Office.
11. Conduct periodic needs assessments regarding professional development procedures and activities.

2. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats present that enhance or hinder the unit's ability to provide those services and meet expected outcomes during the next five years?

SWOT Analysis Results

The SWOT Analysis for Professional Development & Evaluation took place on Thursday, November 11, 2010, from 8:00am to 10:40am at the Highland Business Center. Fourteen individuals participated: Nine staff members and five employees from other parts of the institution (one faculty member, two professional technical staff members, one classified staff member, and one administrator).

When asked to generate what they believed to be the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, the participants came up with several categories in each area: eight Strengths, five Weaknesses, eight Opportunities, and seven Threats. The categories were listed on poster paper.

Next, the participants received colored, adhesive dots and were asked to narrow the categories and indicate the greatest strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by placing dots (or votes) on what they each perceived to be the greatest strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The results of the activity are below.

Strengths: The eight categories of strengths were Expertise, Leadership, Innovation, Collaboration, Client-Orientation, Adaptability, Efficiency, and Sociability. The number of votes cast to indicate the importance of each is below.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Votes</i>
Expertise	14
Leadership	14
Innovation	11
Collaboration	9
Adaptability	5
Efficiency	0
Sociability	0

Weaknesses: The five categories of weaknesses were Communication Disconnect, Lack of Sufficient Support, Being Overextended, Lack of Funding, and Facilities. The number of votes cast for to indicate the importance of each is below.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Votes</i>
Communication Disconnect	18
Lack of Sufficient Support	16
Being Overextended	13
Insufficient Funding	12
Facilities	2

Opportunities: The eight categories of opportunities were Culture Change, Expanded Training Opportunities, Leadership, Global Initiatives, Facilities and Expansion, Dynamic Communities, Collaboration, and Increased Demand. The number of votes cast for to indicate the importance of each is below.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Votes</i>
Culture Change	11
Expanded Training Opportunities	11
Global Initiatives	10
Leadership	10
Facilities and Expansion	5
Dynamic Communities	5
Collaboration	2
Increased Demand	2

Threats: The seven categories of threats were Leadership Unknowns, Politics (Internal) , Cultural Fragmentation, Funding, Explosive Growth, the State, and Facilities. The number of votes cast for to indicate the importance of each is below.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Votes</i>
Leadership Unknowns	14
Politics (Internal)	14
Cultural Fragmentation	11
Funding	9

Explosive Growth	4
The State	3
Facilities	1

3. Using the answers to the first two questions, what improvements to primary services and/or intended outcomes will occur during the next five years?

After reviewing the results of the SWOT analysis, it was clear that some areas could immediately be targeted for improvement or even expansion. It was also clear that many of the threats and weaknesses noted were in fact beyond the control of the office. For example, even though lack of sufficient funding is a definite threat, it is not one which our department can address and remedy.

As we choose which areas we would like to target, we have factored in not only the results of the SWOT analysis but also the results of a college-wide survey of client satisfaction with our services and suggestions for improvements. A third element which has led to our focus are the consistent requests we have had voiced to us in our dealings with our colleagues, from college-wide meetings, to emailed requests to hallway conversations. Although the third element is purely qualitative, we do believe that it offers us value and important information.

The areas PD&E intends to target over the next five years are these: efficiency, communication, culture change, extended training opportunities, global initiatives, and facilities. Below are the reasons for these choices.

Efficiency: Although we feel that we are a generally efficient office, we believe we can improve greatly in this area. And we believe that doing so is crucial. With lack of sufficient funding, we must aim at working smarter; because we do not expect that we will have the funds for more staff, we must develop ways to get our work done more efficiently. If we simply address our tasks by working harder, we will

have an exhausted staff; the department's staff already feel over-extended and we do not want to increase that feeling.

The area which we hope to focus our greatest efficiency efforts on is evaluation. We now have a much more efficient system since we have implemented Class Climate, in spite of the hiccups. However, as our enrollments increase and new campuses open, we must come up with a better way to process the enormous amount of paper flow. Two possibilities for increasing efficiency are below:

1. In order to more efficiently process faculty evaluations for nearly 6000 sections, ACC needs to establish a processing location at each campus. An inordinate amount of time is used during the processing when the forms are gathered and sent in bulk to the central office of Evaluation at Highland Business Center. If the evaluations could all be scanned at the campuses as soon as they are completed, the "heavy lifting" of the process could be completed prior to the return of staff employees in early January. In fact, it might even be completed prior to the holiday break.
2. To decrease the number of paper driven evaluations is to encourage faculty to take their classes to the computer centers in the learning labs at their campuses. It has always been suggested that we decrease the paper processing by having students do the evaluations online. However, it is commonly known that students will rarely fill out online evaluations on their own. But, if classes are taken to the labs, students can fill out the evals online at the computers, decreasing the amount of paper to be processed while assuring that response rates remain sufficiently high. The time needed to fill out the evals would be no more than 15-20 minutes; two-three classes per class period could cycle on and out of the labs for this process.

Communication: Improving methods of communication is a certain way to improve efficiency; thus, this seems like a logical challenge for us to tackle. We have bi-monthly staff meetings, and we have completed our effort to catalog all of our processes and protocols; however, we need to improve our communication channels.

Culture of Change/Global Initiatives: This department sees the current culture of change at ACC as an opportunity that we should address. A variety of important global initiatives are underway, including the Student Success Initiative, the Quality Enhancement Plan, and the General Education Assessment program. The initiatives and others will require training and support for faculty and staff. At this time, employees of ACC are open to training and indeed request it on a regular basis. Our department needs to make sure we address those needs when they are expressed so that the culture continues to grow and expand in its quest for new knowledge and skills.

Extended training opportunities: This element is a logical part of the culture of change. However, even before new initiatives began to take hold at ACC, requests for training have exploded. From all sectors of the college, our area has been tapped to support expanded training in the areas of wellness, risk assessment, technology, leadership skills development, supervisor training, personal finance and so on. As the training needs expand, we want to focus not only on what we offer, but how we publicize and store the events and completion information in our Workshop & Event Registration Database. On way to assure that we stay abreast of the training support that is needed both on a general level and as a result of initiatives is to regularly survey ACC faculty and staff to gather information on training needs. We have a survey in design and will disseminate it in late February, 2011.

Facilities: Even though our limited space is generally seen as nothing we in PD&E can control, we are intending to address it in the long-term. At this time, we have scattered offices and must schedule our training and help others schedule training in buildings whose space use is already at capacity. We are

keeping our heads above water right now, so to speak, but in the very near future, we are not going to be able to address our training and office space needs. Therefore, we are in the process of proposing a centrally located Center of Teaching and Learning which will serve all ACC campuses. This center will house PD& E offices but also include training rooms, meeting rooms, and a resource room.

4. How will the unit measure the extent to which planned improvements have resulted in better service or intended outcomes for students or other stakeholders?

Our office currently evaluates each professional development offering (including the new full-time faculty orientation follow up satisfaction survey) as well as the offerings which we support for other college-wide initiatives, such as the Student Success Initiative. And, as noted earlier, we have designed and will soon disseminate college-wide survey as well. Therefore, we have a good start on measuring our work.

However, we feel certain that we would benefit from follow up measures such as focus groups and small, audience-specific surveys, such as a survey aimed specifically at adjunct faculty or at classified employees. In that way we can better gauge the effectiveness of our measures. The phrasing of the surveys and focus groups will evolve around how our services have 1) supported employees' needs for greater personal and professional development and training and 2) supported employee efforts in serving students and fostering their success.

To measure the effectiveness of our efficiency improvements in evaluation, we will focus on two areas: time used for processing and cost. Our goal will be to not only reduce the time needed for the entire faculty evaluation process, but to also reduce the costs which inevitably are tied to the process, especially the costs resulting from overtime pay and the use of hourly staff. After analysis of what improvement we decide to put into place, we will determine the exact measurement goals we would like to meet, such as percentages of decrease in time and percentages of decrease in cost.

5. How will the planned improvements align with and contribute to the Mission and Intended Outcomes of Austin Community College.

The Vision Statement, Value Statement, and Mission Statements of ACC are noted below:

Vision Statement

The Austin Community College District will be recognized as the preferred gateway to higher education and training and as the catalyst for social equity, economic development, and personal enrichment.

Value Statements

These are the core values that guide the Austin Community College District's internal and external interactions with each other and our community:

- **C - Communication:** ACC values open, responsible exchange of ideas.
- **A - Access:** ACC values an open door to educational potential.
- **R - Responsiveness:** ACC values targeted actions to address Service Area and internal needs within available resources.
- **E - Excellence:** ACC values commitment to integrity and exemplary standards.
- **S - Stewardship:** ACC values personal and professional ownership that generates accountability.

Mission Statement

The ACC District promotes student success and improves communities by providing affordable access to higher education and workforce training in its eight-county service area.

The above missions and values guide the activities of Professional Development and Evaluation. Professional Development support for faculty through the Student Success Initiative and all offerings which address such topics as teaching strategies, classroom management and technology contributes to ACC's successful interaction with students. The Faculty Evaluation process directly provides students' feedback to faculty members as well, thus assuring that ACC is responsive to student needs. Similarly, the work of PD& E supports all employees' quest for Excellence at ACC through employee development such as the ACC leadership Academy. Finally, the Office of PD&E adheres to the concept of sound stewardship of the institution's resources.