

West Los Angeles College Spring 2006 Leadership Retreat
Friday, May 19, 2006
Marina del Rey Hotel

Introductions, Expectations

Objectives:

- Discuss the implications of a two-VP campus
- Build on success of last year through team efforts
- Identify effective tools for communication in a learning community
- Practice strategies for effective planning and implementation

Fran Leonard--Our vision, our values and our mission statement are printed on posterboards--we reaffirm them today. Keep the binders, use them, and bring them back next year, so they can be added to.

Remember what Sandra Serrano said in the Accreditation briefing--West needs to remain focused, sustain momentum and create the future we have chosen.

Doris Givens--the Leadership retreat was constantly referred to in the Accreditation report. We have an opportunity to keep focused on our college goals.

Eloise Crippens--This is Dr. Kikaanza Nuri Robin's second visit as facilitator. She helped us a lot last year. Close the gap between what we say we are and what we actually do.

Kikanza--Last year, she helped us recognize how we could manage to agree. Let's go forward. Discovery learning. Simulations. Provide experiences that help people figure out what they learned and what they can do with what they learned

Groups A and D--enjoy outdoor sports. Most attended the Leadership retreat last year. . (Humorous Digital selection process--raise your index finger and point to your leader) By discussing common experiences/hobbies, etc, you discover common experiences you can fall back on when dynamics get rough. Combined groups sent a leader up to the microphone, they introduced their group or let each person briefly introduce him or herself.

Kikanza reviewed the day's agenda. Then she introduced Fran Leonard who introduced Dr. Eva Conrad--the morning speaker, who will talk about the changes she brought to Moorpark College.

9:30 – 10:30 **Dr. Eva Conrad--The Two VP Model – Implications, Applications**

Dr. Conrad said, "Change is not easy or fun. At community colleges, we have to take very little money and serve a whole lot of students. Never know how much money you are going to get from one year to the next. How creative can we be so that in our colleges we can focus every dollar on the students. You can't ever 'adopt' some other college's model. Talk to each other truthfully. Student services support instruction. By increasing

our options, diverse students, we need student services to support them. But student services will never be as important as instruction. This affects how we assign responsibilities.”

“Horizontal and vertical conversations. We want to minimize the institutional hierarchy. Leaders should look at students holistically. Make management “transparent” to students and the institution. So managers --Deans-- are responsible for students, vocation, student services, at least one college-wide responsibility--many levels. Get out of our silos--We have to feel that “It’s all my job”--I am not just responsible for one specific area. When students call the college, we should say, “Hello, this is West LA College.” (Don’t say Science Division or English Division). Welcome students to the college, don’t barricade them out. Just refer them to the right person. It’s all our job. Make our college a welcoming college. Deans and faculty shouldn’t get too possessive--“This is “my” faculty.” That is not a good model. How we organize the college. How we divide the Vice Presidents.”

“The most common battleground is how you divide VP responsibilities--for instance, 1 VP for Planning, Budget, etc. and 1 VP for operations and student services. Don’t be afraid to break out of the boxes, when assigning responsibilities to two VPs. It doesn’t matter whether budget crisis makes you adopt the 2 VP model, or a philosophical discussion about student learning makes you adopt it. Put the pieces together based on your values. We need lots and lots of talking. Combine VP of Instructions with the VP of Student Services. Then, they would look at students holistically--not one person dealing with money aspects, the other with academic aspects of the student.”

When the change process began, Dr. Conrad went to each department and they talked. Some worried “Will instruction be diluted by student services?” Some were afraid there won’t be a VP to argue for my specific division’s needs. Budget decisions shouldn’t be made in the president’s office. They should be made long before then. You must develop a good planning process linked to budget. We must be flexible and adaptive. Change is going to happen and happen often. We must be quick on our feet. People must feel they have a voice at the table when budget decisions are made. Discuss what worked in the process. Create a culture where you can change things as you discover problems or opportunities.

Moorpark now has one VP of Instruction and Student Services and one VP of Budget and Facilities. Moorpark (15,000 students) originally had 9 Deans, 5 real deans--academic--2 staff deans and 2 student service deans. All deans became Deans of student learning--they each had transfer, vocational, student services, etc. Some welcomed the changes; some retired. They are now down to 7 “real” deans. Succession planning. Who is next in line? They began a management intern position. This is a 1 year --12 month temporary reassignment out of instruction. In this way a teacher can discover if they want to become a dean.

Of course there will be resistance. Sometimes everyone in the room may feel frightened about impending changes or uncertainties. All teachers and deans should be focused on

students . You may have a different Dean every few years. Your room may change. Your office may change.

Allow people to state the things that bother them without judging them--the worries that “stick in their gut.” Sometimes, if you allow people to really express what worries them, the light of day cleanses things. There are no perfect answers to our challenges, but you need to keep engaged in the process of constantly working to solve these challenges.

Faculty at Moorpark has developed very little on-line instruction. Only 4% are over the age of 39. They need to appeal to more adult students. 73% are younger than 24. Researcher Vincent Tinto says 40% of entering freshman will drop out--no matter what their background.

10:30 - 10:45 Break

10:45 – 11:15 **Fierce Conversations: Communicating in a Learning Community--**

Kikaanza said, These are tough conversations where you need candor, honesty, compassion. Presenting your ideas with power--page 2 of the yellow handout--**PRESANT** (acronym). Start with your point. Don't give a long preamble. Time is a precious resource. Don't waste it. What action do you want the group to take? Some folks repeat the same thing at every meeting they attend. **Roadblocks**, page 3 of the handout. What is it that you want from me? Sometimes you just listen. **Bridges** Assume the speaker has a valid point and ask for more information so you can figure out what they are right about. Don't spend all your time preparing to rebut them. The person with the problem is responsible for solving it, not you. What do you want from me. **Helpful phrases on page 7.** Will you say some more about that? What is our goal here? Help me understand what you meant by..... I'm puzzled. I'm not sure how this relates to..... What are our options? Is there another way we can do this? I can't listen that fast, please talk to me a little slower. What I just heard (from you) isLet me just play it back to you.....**What is collaboration?** Active involvement. Clear definition of roles. Be candid and compassionate; honest and tactful. Balance these two sometimes opposing skills. Building good relationships and taking time to process.

11:15 - noon **Getting It Done: Planning and Implementing Team Goals and Objectives**

The group worked on a team-building exercise. The facilitator divided us into teams of about 8 people and set us the task of creating a book in a limited amount of time (was it 2 hours? less?) The entire retreat discussed what the book should be, considering Books that Changed Me, Tips for Surviving College, and settling on Great Westside Restaurants. Each team had to consider not only the content of the book, but its physical production. We were given a small budget for the project, and the facilitator negotiated with the hotel staff to allow us to photocopy, using those funds.

Teams worked together to overcome the obstacles of time and material, each producing a product.

12 noon - 12:45 pm Lunch

12:45 pm – 2:00 Continuation of morning session

2:00 – 2:15 Break

2:15 – 3:00 Debrief Group Process

After the presentation of the books, we discussed what we had learned. There was general agreement that we had gotten to know the people on our team a bit better. We had made some strides in thinking outside the box (for example, in adding to the budget with small contributions from team members), in focusing on a product, and in recognizing that things will go wrong (as when it turned out the hotel had not realized that half a dozen different teams were going to turn up at their copier, and withdrew permission to use it).

3:00 - 3:25 Open Microphone

3:25 – 3:30 pm Evaluation, Closing