

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

San Juan College

Project Details		
Title	Designing a Communications and Input Process for San Juan College	Status REVIEWED
Category	5-Leading and Communicating	Updated 09-14-2010
Timeline		Reviewed 09-24-2010
Planned Project Kickoff	08-17-2007	Created 11-24-2009
Target Completion	05-31-2010	Version 3 of 3

1: Project Goal

A: The goal of this action project is to benchmark and recommend collaborative institutional processes and structures that will enhance communication as well as serve as bases for sustaining continuous improvement at a functional level at SJC.

2: Reasons For Project

A: In February 2007, the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) survey was administered to SJC employees. The purpose of the survey was to obtain the perceptions of personnel concerning the college climate and to provide data to assist SJC in promoting more open and constructive communication among faculty, staff and administrators. The top five areas in need of improvement identified were: (1) The extent to which information is shared within this institution, (2) The extent to which open and ethical communication is practiced at this institution, (3) The extent to which decisions are made at the appropriate level at this institution, (4) The extent to which I am able to appropriately influence the direction of this institution and (5) The extent to which a spirit of cooperation exists at this institution. Currently, structures and processes are not sufficiently functional to allow appropriate sharing, review or input into decision making at SJC. A Communication and Input Design Team has been established to achieve the goal as stated above.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: All organizational areas of the College will be involved in and affected by this project

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: The key organizational process (es) this Action Project will be to improve communication, decision-making and planning processes.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: Three years appears to be a reasonable period of time to research and benchmark possible strategies with other institutions, provide opportunities for dialogue about possible proposals for improvement, and to assess the effectiveness of solutions that are implemented.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: The response to G above incorporates some of the ways the project will be monitored. In addition, the Personal Assessment of Campus Environment (PACE) will be readministered at yet-to-be-determined intervals during the course of the project to measure changes that may have occurred since its initial administration in February 2007.

7: Project Outcome Measures

- A: (1)Changes in responses to the PACE survey (2)Establishment of new communication and input processes and structures (3)Assessment of the effectiveness of these new communication and input processes and structures

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A: The Team for Strategic Oversight (TSO) decided to focus its efforts on the following objective identified the previous year: Promote through a representative body effective communication between employees, students, and the administration regarding strategic issues affecting San Juan College. Recognizing communication as one of the College's greatest opportunities for improvement, the TSO created and administered a communication preferences survey. Of the 144 responses: 50% of employees strongly disagree or disagree that they are well informed on executive level decisions while 34% agree or strongly agree that they are well informed; 26% of employees strongly disagree or disagree that they are well informed on department/school level decisions while 53% agree or strongly agree that they are well informed on department/school level decisions and 10% strongly disagree or disagree that they are well informed on direct work group level decisions while 75% agree or strongly agree that they are well informed on direct work group level decisions. 49% strongly disagree or disagree that they are well informed on changes in SJC process or procedures at the executive level while 34% agree or strongly agree that they are well informed on changes in SJC process or procedures at the executive level; 29% strongly disagree or disagree that they are well informed on changes in SJC process or procedures at the department/school level while 48% agree or strongly agree that they are well informed on changes in SJC process or procedures at the department/school level and 18% strongly disagree or disagree that they are well informed on changes in SJC process or procedures at the direct group level while 65% agree or strongly agree that they are well informed on changes in SJC process or procedures at the executive level. 71% of respondents stated they were aware or highly aware of the procedures to access internal data and other information.

The PACE survey was administered in December 2009. The bottom mean scores identified as areas in need of improvement include: (1) The extent to which information is shared within this institution, (2) the extent to which open and ethic communication is practiced at this institution, and (3) the extent to which decisions are made at the appropriate level at this institution. Because of the survey results, this action project will remain active for an additional year to address these issues.

Current status: Active

2: Institution Involvement

- A: SJC involved faculty, staff and students in the project as follows: (1) Faculty and professional and support staff continued service on the TSO, (2) An all-employee survey that was distributed by e-mail aimed to identify employee communication preferences (144 responses) and PACE survey available to 485 employees (222 responses) representing 32% of support staff, 57% of faculty, and 51% professional staff. Results of the communication preference survey and recommendations for addressing PACE survey results were presented to the President in May.

3: Next Steps

- A: Next steps include: (1) Focus groups will be conducted Fall 2010 to address the issues of concern identified in the PACE survey of open and ethical communication and decision-making at the appropriate level. TSO will recommend improvement strategies to the executive leadership for implementation in Spring 2011. (2) SJC is currently conducting an environmental scan that will be completed September 2010. TSO will facilitate the strategic planning process that is scheduled to be completed by May 2011.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: No new effective practice (s) were identified this year.

5: Project Challenges

A: Challenges include maintaining momentum and enthusiasm with the TSO members. New members will be appointed to replace outgoing members which should assist in revitalizing the team.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: As San Juan College moves through its Action Project, it appears the next steps are a continuation of the original action project. The Higher Learning Commission commends the institution for thoroughly reporting the data that it has developed. This data may help SJC as it plans its next steps. The TSO was established and it now recognizes *communication* as one of the College's next greatest opportunities for improvement. Effective communication improvements between employees, students, and the administration regarding strategic planning issues affecting San Juan College will now be implemented. Based on the data from the communication preferences survey conducted by the newly formed TSO and the PACE survey conducted in 2009, the TSO has ample room for improving communication at San Juan College. AQIP Category 5-Leading and Communicating is vital to Systems Portfolio success as well as the overall AQIP process. Remember to include communication concerns both internally and externally.

2: Institution Involvement

A: San Juan College continues to be inclusive in its approach and response to improving communications. The only recommendation is to remember that external stakeholders are part of both the communication process as well as the strategic planning process.

3: Next Steps

A: As San Juan College continues with other steps in this action project and provides assessment data results to the President and the executive leadership, it would be prudent to consider including the college community in its distribution of the improvement strategies. This will keep the lines of communication open and clear. An environmental scan and economic impact studies are additional resources to assist the college in its strategic planning process. Keeping communication concerns at the top of the list as the college enters strategic planning activities is key for the plan to being dynamic and representing all stakeholders at the college. Another idea would be to create a communication plan just for the strategic planning process utilizing many of the ideas that have arisen from this action project.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: San Juan College could include as an effective practice the use of focus groups as a qualitative complement to the quantitative survey results that resulted in the review of the data about communication.

5: Project Challenges

A: An additional challenge will be to ensure that group dynamics or changes in positions might affect forward motion in a new process such as this project. The Higher Learning Commission commends San Juan College for following through on this project. As communications surveys become institutionalized at the college, San Juan may want to consider retiring this Action Project and moving on to new Action Projects that will help it to meet its

mission.