The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Joliet Junior College

Project Details			
Title	Promote and support professional & personal development for non-faculty employees	**Status**	COMPLETED
Category	4-Valuing People	**Updated**	09-13-2007
Timeline		**Reviewed**	09-21-2007
Planned Project Kickoff	03-31-2005	**Created**	11-24-2009
Actual Completion		**Version**	3

1: Project Goal

A: Establish a process that would develop, encourage, and reward participation of non-faculty JJC employees in professional and personal development activities. This would include both on- and off-campus activities that would promote and encourage involvement resulting in enhanced job satisfaction and performance.

2: Reasons For Project

A: Valuing People The College's most important resource is its employees. In order to develop and enhance a professional/personal learning environment, it is essential that JJC adopt a systematic training approach to attract, develop, mentor, and retain quality staff. This initiative will empower and encourage employees to update their skills and share new ideas.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: All non-faculty employees Students (indirectly) External stakeholders Human Resources Professional/Personal Development Committee

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Developing the workshops for Professional and Personal Development weeks (Fall and Spring) Developing activities for Professional and Personal Development Day (in February) Reviewing and improving orientation of new employees Developing on-going training opportunities Scheduling of training for equal access Developing a calendar of training that provides accessible time offerings Identifying training needs through the performance management system (metrics and objectives) Budgetary process Recognizing employee contributions through the Employee Recognition Program/JJC Core Values Strong encouragement from upper management to all JJC employees that equal access to training and workshops is available

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: Communication of JJC's mission and strategic plan will help drive this action project in addition to the support by administration and institutional leaders. We will need to offer timely and valuable workshops/training and implement an incentive program that would benefit all non-faculty constituents. Create a culture that encourages, supports, and promotes professional and personal development for JJC non-faculty employees.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Track attendance at workshops and training (diversity of participation by departments) Develop training needs analysis Request expansion of the Professional and Personnel Development budget to broaden training opportunities for all non-faculty groups Develop a centralized training/workshop calendar Organize and conduct interdepartmental networking group meetings (i.e. departmental secretary meetings)

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: The number of attendees and the diversity of participants Quality, variety, and scheduling of programs offered Implementation of skills learned to improve productivity Professional and personal goal attainment as related to performance metrics and objectives Monitor expenditures of the training budget

8: Other Information

A: Communicate with the Board of Trustees and administration Develop plan for setting aside one day per year that the campus would be closed to have 100% participation Development of a training calendar Develop a tool for tracking attendance and diversity of participants Develop a tool for evaluation of professional and personal development activities Develop a year-long theme of activities and events for Professional and Personal Development Request budget allocation for Training Coordinator who would be responsible for training as well as the coordination of the training calendar Form a sub-committee of this team to research an incentive program Form a sub-committee of this team to research tuition reimbursement planDevelop continued buy-in through communicating with the Board of Trustees and administration Setting aside one day per year that the campus would be closed to have 100% participation. Expansion of training calendar Begin search for a Training Coordinator Develop a comprehensive process to review and revise tools to track attendance, diversity of the participants, and training needs Develop an incentive program Develop a tuition reimbursement planDevelop ongoing support from the Board of Trustees and administration Continued evaluation of processes and make recommendations for further improvement Develop a pool and/or list of possible speakers and training workshops both in-house and off-campus Be proactive for training staff as it relates to new technology Recommend that attendance at training and workshops be included in metrics and goals for performance-based increases Implement an incentive program to increase attendance at in-house and off-campus training Implement a plan that would give tuition reimbursement for those interested in obtaining a higher education; i.e., Bachelors, Masters, and doctorate programs

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Working as a team on the Professional Development action project has been a learning experience for all of us especially this last year, 2006-7. Much work was done this year so that solid recommendations could be made to JJC's new administration. With a new president coming in July 2006, the team and the college overall had a major concern about ongoing support for AQIP. Knowing that support of AQIP was a hiring factor for the new president, we still worried that all of our work and recommendations could fall on deaf ears. Not only did we get a new president, but our Vice President of Academic Affairs, who was one of our key AQIP leaders, took a position at another community college in summer 2006 as well, and the other key person went on sabbatical leave in the Fall of 2006. However, the team kept working diligently toward the charges we drew up in Year One of our Declaration. Even though we lost a few team members, those remaining meshed and worked well together especially when dividing into smaller groups to concentrate on specific goals. We broke into three groups, each one having its own project, as follows. ☐ Group 1: Prepare a job description for a Training Coordinator ☐ Group 2: Develop an Incentive Program to encourage non-faculty staff to attend training sessions, classes, and/or workshops ☐ Group 3: Develop a Tuition Reimbursement Plan to complete degrees for professional staff beyond the associate degree level. Eventually, the Incentive Program group and the Tuition Reimbursement Plan group blended together because, at times, their work overlapped. Training Coordinator Position: The Training Coordinator will report directly to the Diversity Manager housed in the Human Resources Department. This job description was developed by obtaining descriptions from other sources, adding components that would fit JJC's needs, and finally, blending all information into one document. When it was completed, the entire team tweaked it until we felt we had come up with a position that would be a workable and agreeable one to administration. A copy of the job description is included with this report. In 2005, JJC hired a Diversity Manager whose job responsibilities included serving as co-chairperson of our Professional and Personal Development Committee (P&PD). This person was also asked to be a part of this Project Action team because of its ties with staff development. Before this person joined the team, discussion of specific staff development needs had already taken place. These needs included a college-wide Training Calendar, an updated tool for evaluating staff development activities, development of a tool for tracking attendance and diversity of participants, and development of a year-long theme for activities. Even though we had our first Diversity Manager for less than one year, she was able to make all these things happen. However, a vacancy remained in this position for several months and was just filled in August 2007. Incentive Program: Between the subcommittee that was working on the Incentive Program and the other members of our entire team, we identified questions that were included on a survey that was sent out to other community colleges in the area. The goal was to find out what was successful at other institutions and then determine what we could do at JJC to encourage non-faculty staff to get more involved in training, attending in-house staff development activities, and striving to learn more to make their jobs easier. Based on the findings from our survey, we developed an incentive plan that we named Training for Treasures. This plan is included with this report. Side by

side with the Incentive Program is a concern of attendance for in-house staff development activities at JJC. Some areas/departments do not or can not allow their staff to attend activities because of losing office coverage. It was found that other area community colleges have a mandatory attendance staff development day in which their campuses are closed to allow all staff the opportunity to attend. These colleges develop a full-day agenda of activities that are beneficial to staff as well as faculty. We are making the recommendation to administration that this occur at JJC. Not only would this solve the office coverage concern, but animosity between those who can and can not attend would diminish. Feedback returned from the survey sent out for the Incentive Program resulted in comments directly connected to another of our targeted items; namely, a Tuition Reimbursement Plan for those interested in furthering their education beyond an associate's degree. Survey results gave us information that other community colleges do offer reimbursement to non-faculty groups. This information coupled with information on the process of how JJC's faculty is reimbursed, helped us to develop a plan that could be developed for other constituents of JJC. The plan we developed is also included with this report. Tuition Reimbursement Program: To go one step further and to determine the need for offering tuition reimbursement to non-faculty staff at JJC, our Team developed a survey (see results attached) that went to full-time, non-faculty staff. The results were very strong in favor of developing a program that would reimburse staff for coursework taken by full-time staff furthering their education beyond an AA or AS degree. Based on the results, the consensus of the Team was to annually budget $30,000 into a pool specifically for reimbursement of tuition expended by staff who have met the criteria established by the college (see attachment). There were no hand-written surveys returned to be included with survey results that would impact those returned electronically. As encouragement for staff who may need that extra boost in pursuing educational goals, it was also determined that a mentoring system be established. Mentoring is established for other purposes at JJC such as newly hired faculty, and it was determined that some working toward furthering their education may need more support than others. This idea will be suggested for a session during the Spring 2008 Professional and Personal Development week at JJC. It is hoped that this idea would spark enough interest in those attending this session for them to continue meeting on their own for further support. Going another step further for those interested in furthering their education beyond an AA or an AS degree, it will also be suggested through the Professional and Personal Development committee to offer a college fair for employees. This is done for students at JJC, but the thought is to hone in on specific needs for employees and gather colleges that could assist staff in their pursuit of their goal(s). Of course, some of the above are budgetary issues that needed to be addressed. Knowing that budget development begins early every year, a preliminary meeting was scheduled with the Director of Human Resources since staff development dollars fall under that department. During this preliminary meeting, the possibility of the Training Coordinator being a part-time position, to start, was discussed in order to get the position implemented. Once established, it could then be determined when the position should transition into full-time. A review of the Tuition Reimbursement recommendation led to a revision to set up a lump sum annually, and reimbursement deducted until that sum is depleted. Annual adjustments to that figure could be made when necessary. The cost of rewards for the Training for Treasures will be minimal and could be absorbed in the existing staff development budget.

2: Institution Involvement

A: From the beginning, the leadership for this Quality Action Project came from professional staff members with a long history of engagement in college activities. Even though the team lost a few members, we were able to involve some others as time went on. We were a small team, but very focused in what we did toward the completion of our goals. Not only did we rely on conversation with other JJC employees, but, indirectly, we had assistance from others, both from education and from business. If it were not for these diverse outside contacts, we would not have had as much solid information to develop the recommendations that we did. Internally, the Team was initially chosen from a cross-section of all positions and constituencies of staff people. This group included campus police, physical plant, administrative staff, and clerical staff. Initially, some of the team members had to be convinced and assured they were the "right" person to serve on the team. Some had never had the opportunity to serve on a committee, nor had they ever been asked to serve on a committee such as this. Those same team members have grown into the most valuable and confident members of our team. Those on our subcommittee have been dedicated and focused with our mission and our goals. We have grown and learned as individuals during this process and are pleased that we have had the opportunity to be a part of the AQIP accreditation for the institution. Additionally, this Action Project has put staff together that would not have otherwise had the opportunity to share ideas. It has been a pleasure to see ideas formulate and come to consensus when that needed to be done. It was not difficult to keep our team active and motivated because we knew we were working toward developing some things that did not exist – procedures that would be extremely beneficial for us. With that goal in mind, the team had its own motivation already built in. Ideas ran rampant with so many suggestions, wishes, and dreams that sometimes we felt we would never be able to sort through them all. It is not often that you can be a part of such a motivating and stimulating group.

3: Next Steps

A: With a preliminary meeting for budgetary items already completed, the following recommendations will be given to the appropriate people. For the FY 2009 budgeting process, AQIP leadership will bring forth the recommendations for implementation. 1. Training for

Treasures (incentive program to attend workshops, training, etc.) 2. Tuition Reimbursement Plan (to further education beyond the associate's degree) 3. Training Coordinator job description Other meetings may be scheduled, and we will be ready to actively pursue whatever is required.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Our findings resulted in our learning that JJC is not a pioneer in any of the recommendations we have presented. Actually, we used other colleges and outside sources as a means to develop the recommendations and we made use of the feedback from others to help us get started. However, the processes we developed may be helpful to other colleges if they are looking to revise their current practice or procedure; or to those institutions that may be like JJC, looking to develop their own. Both our Training for Treasures and our Tuition Reimbursement Plan should undoubtedly be a morale booster in that we have never had incentives like these in the past for non-faculty staff. There is finally something out there for those other than faculty.

5: Project Challenges

A: When we lost members of our team, we were able to add some very strong replacements while still keeping our team fairly small. We ended up with a very active and dedicated team who were able to stay focused and who worked together very well. It allowed for openness of discussion when everyone realized we were working toward goals that would benefit non-faculty constituents. The next stopping point was realized when budgetary issues arose and we needed assurance that money could be made available for our recommendations. This was resolved by meeting with the Human Resources Director, informing him of the items being proposed and the possible amounts. Future meetings will be needed, but the assurance we received settled our initial concerns. With the retirement of our former president ,who was very supportive of the AQIP accreditation process, the Action Team had lengthy discussion about fears that what we were doing would not be supported by the newly hired president. We invited the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who was one of the people who oversaw the action projects, to a team meeting for answers to our questions. He assured us that one of the criteria for the new president was that he/she would need to be supportive of the AQIP process for which the college was committed. We were concerned that all the work we had put into this project could become a moot point. With those assurances, we moved forward and proceeded in the pursuit of the targets on our Declaration.

6: AQIP Involvement

A:

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: #2 The College is making reasonable progress toward completion of the project and development of an institution-wide continuous quality improvement culture. The primary goal of the project is clearly defined and the response in this section documents a thorough and well-organized process of identifying and evaluating specific programs for meeting this goal. The team accomplished what it set out to do in the first year of the project and effectively laid the groundwork for programs that will provide professional development opportunities to non-faculty staff.

2: Institution Involvement

A:

3: Next Steps

A:

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A:

5:	**Project Challenges**

A:

6:	**AQIP Involvement**

A: