The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Joliet Junior College

Project Details			
Title	Developing a professional teaching and learning center for JJC Employees	**Status**	COMPLETED
Category	4-Valuing People	**Updated**	09-14-2012
Timeline		**Reviewed**	09-24-2012
Planned Project Kickoff	09-15-2010	**Created**	12-13-2010
Actual Completion	09-27-2013	**Version**	2

1: Project Goal

A: The center will provide professional development (PD) opportunities, resources, and support for Joliet Junior College employees so JJC can deliver a lifetime of affordable, accessible, and quality learning programs and services to the diverse community it serves. JJC is growing in many ways. Our disparate professional development offerings must also expand and transform into a coherent system capable of creating and sustaining a professional learning community. This initiative will require creating physical and virtual spaces and developing an electronic hub to coordinate facilities, scheduling, hospitality services, reporting, and communications.

2: Reasons For Project

A: JJC is experiencing significant growth in student enrollment on campus and online. Our learners are Millennials, minorities, former military and parents; academically they are English-language learners, first generation, underprepared, and economically disadvantaged. Our faculty and staff are only human but they need to perform like heroes to effectively serve our varied and expanding student body. These heroes, in turn, need to be nurtured and sustained.

Over time, JJC has developed many professional development (PD) opportunities and services for faculty and staff. However, these opportunities and services have developed without a common mission and have been occasionally delivered by content-heavy but andragogically-light individuals. The institution has no defined processes for developing high-quality professional development, locating appropriate facilities, effectively communicating the offerings, providing hospitality services, or streamlining scheduling. In addition, the separate activities may not be aligned to the college's mission and strategic goals. While well-meaning, this inconsistent and disparate approach has led to redundancies and over-capacity in our professional development offerings.

With the inception of a new senior leadership team, creation of three academic dean positions, and substantial turnover among department chairs, the institution is being transformed. This initiative embodies the new goals for the institution as well as responds to the needs of the increasing number of new employees. In order for JJC to achieve its strategic goals for student success, institutional sustainability, and technology-facilitated services, it must take deliberate measures to develop the capacity of its employees and foster a culture in which all employees are continuously learning and improving their professional knowledge and skills.

The Center will be the physical and virtual hub that fosters the growth of high quality PD that is effectively delivered to benefit our employees and ultimately our students.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: All areas of the institution provide professional development and have indicated their willingness to participate. Specifically, these are Academic Affairs, Administrative Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, Institutional Advancement and Research, and Student Development. Some examples of offerings include assessment workshops, brown bag lunch presentations, computer training and educational technology skill development, data workshops for student development staff, induction activities for new faculty, new employee orientation, Webinars, and safety training for maintenance staff.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A:
- **Expand PD Offerings that Enable Employees to Effectively Work with Students**. The varied and diverse backgrounds and experiences that our students bring to the classroom require equally diverse and varied approaches/practices by our faculty and staff. Student success and retention is affected by conditions within and beyond the classroom. Continual learning is necessary to ensure our curricula, instruction, assessment, and student service practices are aligned with research and effective practices.

- **Create a Culture of Professional Learning.** A concerted effort will be made to develop our employees' capacity to benefit from and contribute to professional learning across the institution. Professional learning opportunities will include sharing information gleaned from sabbaticals, professional journals, conferences and meetings. Some employees will also present PD at JJC and beyond.
- **Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness of PD Communications, Logistics, and Data Collection.** Information about all PD offerings will be available at and disseminated from a Web-based PD Hub/Portal. Employees will be able to find and register for all PD offerings through the Hub/Portal. Arrangements will be facilitated by the scheduling and registration system. The PD Hub/Portal will provide centralized access to information such as the type and number of sessions, number of participants, and survey results, as well as individual reports of PD activity.

5:	**Project Time Frame Rationale**

A: This project is expected to unfold over at least two to three years due to funding and space limitations.

The first summer of the project will be used to install, test, and implement the Web-based PD Hub/Portal. During the first academic year we will conduct ongoing assessment and make adjustments to the PD Hub/Portal as well as the collaborative processes. The project will be implemented the first year through in-kind donations of staff and materials. The staff will include the project Co-leaders, their teams, and other volunteers. In subsequent years, a budget and designated staffing will be defined based on our Year 1 experience. The speed with which the physical center can be developed and the availability of designated center staff during Years 2 & 3 is dependent on available funding and timely completion of construction/remodeling activities.

YEAR 1 Activities

SPRING/SUMMER 2010

- Convene Advisory Team (a representative from each group that provides/sponsors professional development) to create initial needs assessment and list of offerings (in different formats and timeframes to meet needs).
- Install and pilot test PD Hub/Portal.
- Develop PD for the Hub/Portal to be delivered to Key Users (an individual from each group/sponsor who maintain the information on the Hub/Portal) and employees/participants.

FALL 2010 – SPRING 2011

- Conduct institutional needs assessment with Advisory Team and Key Users
- Provide PD for Key Users so they can load info into the PD Hub/Portal.
- Facilitate initial use of Hub/Portal by Key Users.
- Provide support for development, delivery and assessment of PD.
- Communicate (multiple times) with all employees the purpose, location (physical and Web) and contact information for the Center.
- Communicate offerings and registration info on a regular basis.
- Provide PD (multiple times) for employees to learn registration and other functions of the Hub/Portal.
- Facilitate initial use of Hub/Portal by employees/participants.
- Evaluate every use of the physical space through online assessment.
- Make adjustments based on assessment results.
- Evaluate all PD offerings. Use online assessments if possible and incorporate standard and customized questions for each offering.
- Convene Advisory Team as needed to coordinate offerings, discuss results and make adjustments.
- Develop recommendations (programmatic and staffing) and associated budget for expansion in years 2 and 3.

YEAR 2 and 3 Activities

- Expand offerings as resources allow.
- Collect and report data on usage, quality and impact.
- Routinely communicate results to and receive advice from Advisory Team.
- Implement improvements/adjustments.
- Relocate and secure additional physical space and resources as JJC building and remodeling occurs.
- Coordinate with the Library and employees to place and/or procure professional journals, books and other PD resources for display and use in the Center. Center staff & Advisory Team.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: The Advisory Team was specifically designed to monitor project implementation. The project Co-Leaders and the Project team (VP Academic Affairs, VP Institutional Advancement and Research, and an AQIP coordinator) will monitor progress (of the activities listed in section G, above) through regular communications and project meetings. The agenda for the project meetings will include a progress report, Advisory meeting summaries, budget status, next steps, and future recommendations.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Expected project outcomes include:

- Increased student engagement and retention. (Evidence: CCSSE , Local retention, and assessment data.)
- Increased satisfaction regarding professional development on institutional climate survey (Evidence: PACE, Participant surveys.)

Additional Evidence we expect to collect:

- Number and type of professional development offerings.
- Participant satisfaction with presenters, PD content, and Center services.
- Sponsor, Advisory, and Key User satisfaction with Center services.
- Participant reports that they have received education and/or training that they are using to better meet the needs of the institution through the work they do.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Objective: Expand PD Offerings that Enable Employees to Effectively Work with Students.
Achievements:

- The Professional Learning Center continued to host Webinars and face-to-face sessions for all staff
- A faculty (adjunct and fulltime) needs assessment was conducted during spring semester 2012. The topics selected by 73% of respondents were "fostering critical thinking in the classroom" and "increasing student participation and engagement."
- The face-to-face orientation for adjunct faculty was converted to an online format to enable access 24x7.
- While the total number of sessions during Professional and Personal Development (P&PD) week has remained relatively constant for the last two semesters (SP12=42, FL12=45), the percentage of sessions targeted for faculty has increased by 10% (from 45% to 55%) over the previous year.

Objective: Create a Culture of Professional Learning.
Achievements:

- The iCampus Department started holding monthly "Online Faculty Idea Exchanges" during the spring 2012 semester. These sessions are intended for JJC faculty who teach online and blended courses. They provide an opportunity for faculty to hear the latest iCampus news, participate in discussions, and network with other faculty teaching iCampus courses.
- A Faculty Development forum was added to the VTLC for faculty to share information about conferences and related professional development opportunities that they have experienced.

Objective: Increase Efficiency and Effectiveness of PD Communications, Logistics and Data Collection.
Achievements:

- The P&PD Web site added an email reminder feature. Site moderators can now send batch emails to registrants reminding them of the name, date, time and location of each session.
- Software and hardware in the Professional Learning Center (PLC) Lab was updated as new versions became available. A brighter projector replaced the original.
- In the last year the PLC Lab was used 58 times to provide training and professional development opportunities for JJC faculty and staff. These sessions have included hands on technology training, webinars, and various lectures.

- The formal orientation for adjunct faculty was converted to an online format and made available for new and existing adjunct faculty.
- A new collection of resources, entitled the Adjunct Faculty Resources, was added to the Virtual Teaching and Learning Center (VTLC), which is faculty group located within our Learning Management System (LMS). These resources include:
    - The online orientation for new adjuncts.
    - A collection of useful documents and web links.
    - A discussion forum for adjunct faculty to post questions they may have. These questions will be used to build a Frequently Asked Questions list.

2: Institution Involvement

A:
- A project co-leader collaborated with the Faculty Development Committee and P&PD Committee to develop and implement the faculty needs assessment.
- The Faculty Development forum in the Virtual Teaching and Learning Center (VTLC) was created in collaboration with the Academic Deans, and they regularly interact with faculty via this forum.
- The Professional and Personal Development Committee received reports and provided input at monthly meetings.

3: Next Steps

A: Expand PD Offerings that Enable Employees to Effectively Work with Students.
Next Steps:
- Conduct needs assessment for non-faculty.
- Focus efforts on providing offerings that match identified needs.
- Be strategic regarding the sessions offered during P&PD week—rather than offer all that are proposed.
- Offer more professional development sessions throughout the year, at different times, and deliver them virtually in addition to face-to face.
- Continue to developed and post online resources for faculty in the Virtual Teaching and Learning Center. These may include:
    - Recorded lectures and presentations.
    - Job aids and tutorials.

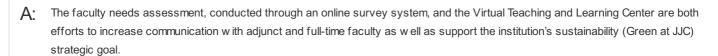Create a Culture of Professional Learning.
Next Steps:
- Continue to enlist faculty presenters for P&PD Week and other professional development sessions offered throughout the year.
- Recommend a "Faculty Development Coordinator" position during the next budget planning cycle. This position would be responsible for coordinating and reporting the faculty development activities throughout the institution.

Increase Efficiency and Effectiveness of PD Communications, Logistics and Data Collection.
Next Steps:
- Examine other professional development software options to enable an online calendar, registration, reminders and Outlook scheduling.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The faculty needs assessment, conducted through an online survey system, and the Virtual Teaching and Learning Center are both efforts to increase communication with adjunct and full-time faculty as well as support the institution's sustainability (Green at JJC) strategic goal.

5: Project Challenges

A: <u>Expand PD Offerings that Enable Employees to Effectively Work with Students</u>.
Challenges: Changing long-standing practices and structures has been and will continue to be a challenge.

<u>Create a Culture of Professional Learning</u>.
Challenges: Current financial resources may prevent or hamper the College from securing a "Faculty Development Coordinator".

<u>Increase Efficiency and Effectiveness of PD Communications, Logistics and Data Collection</u>.
Challenges: *Live 25* software is available however, its use is not supported by IT. This software was intended to be used for booking the PLC Lab, enabling participants to self-register, sending reminders and collecting survey responses. The portal is still not widely used by employees so the "Everybody" email continues to be our most reliable (and despised) communication tool.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: Joliet Junior College has accomplished a great deal over the past year on this action project. It has successfully used technology to address professional development needs of its full-time and adjunct faculty and has improved communication and access to information for faculty groups. It is difficult to determine how effective these improvements are from the limited amount of data provided. When assessing its achievements, JJC might better understand its progress by collecting and analyzing more data. Such analysis could help the institution determine if this action project is having the desired effect.

2: Institution Involvement

A: JJC worked with the project's target constituent group, faculty, when developing and implementing many parts of this action project. It is important to include faculty to get buy-in for the project. JJC might consider ways to involve even more faculty in this project and in its professional development.

3: Next Steps

A: JJC will expand its efforts to develop more professional development opportunities at the institution by assessing the PD needs of non-faculty. This step is important in the development of a professional learning culture. Inclusion of all employees may help to ensure that the desired culture shift occurs. Likewise, hiring a faculty development coordinator should help in creating a culture shift by indicating that the institution is willing to put resources behind the goal of creating a culture of learning. JJC might consider enlisting non-faculty presenters for P&PD Week, etc. Such a move could assist in the desired culture shift by demonstrating that the expertise of all employees is valued.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The use of online resources can be effective in improving communication and can support "green" initiatives. JJC is to be commended on its efforts in both of these regards. Although part of the Virtual Teaching and Learning Center, the creation of an online orientation and resource center for adjunct faculty could also be considered to be an effective practice.

5: Project Challenges

A: The challenges of this project for JJC are not uncommon: culture change and resources. The institution is taking steps to create a desired culture shift and could continue to look at ways to inspire and expedite this change. JJC is also encouraged to investigate alternative methods for obtaining funding for software implementation via grants or gifts. The institution is making progress on this action plan.

Project Outcome

1: Reason for completion

A: This action project has served its purpose to initiate improvements and is being formally closed to make room for a new data stewardship project. The project activities however are important to the college and will continue.

2: Success Factors

A: The project succeeded in creating a physical Professional Learning Center (PLC), a Virtual Teaching and Learning Center (VTLC), and online orientation and resources for adjunct faculty. Information gleaned by faculty from sabbaticals, professional journals, conferences and meetings are shared through the VTLC.

The role of the Professional and Personal Development (P&PD) committee shifted to be more data-driven and focused on employee needs. Before this project, the PPD committee primarily publicized sessions that were arbitrarily scheduled during the first days of fall and spring semester. As a result of this project, sessions are scheduled in response to needs identified by faculty and staff (non-faculty), and the committee realizes professional development sessions should take place throughout the year. Two subcommittees have been created; one to focus on addressing faculty needs and the other to focus on staff needs. The number and relevance of sessions for faculty dramatically increased. Faculty members have been and will continue to be recruited to present sessions.

3: Unsuccessful Factors

A: The project anticipated finding a technology solution to centralize access and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of professional development communications, logistics and data collection. Unfortunately, this aspect of the project was not realized. Two technology systems were tested—the first was insufficient, and the second, while more robust, did not meet the college's standard for information security. The search continues.

A coherent professional development system was not fully realized. The existing structure of volunteers with no authority (PPD) has become more focused, however multiple individuals still provide professional development independently and without specific guidance or accountability.