

## **Actionable Improvement Plan for Campus Morale (Building an Inclusive College and Working Environment)**

Southwestern College is committed to creating an environment that models respectful communication, multicultural competency, civility, and collegiality for students' success and the community served by the College. While the College resolved Recommendation Eight from the 2010 ACCJC Action Letter, its goal is to engage in continuous improvement of campus morale through an institutional cultural change. The College has remained in a process of evaluation and planning in the area of campus morale since 2009. Previously the campus experienced rapid turnover in leadership positions and insufficient transparency in budget, planning, and communication. This culminated with the election of two new Governing Board (Board) members during the 2010 General Election. As a result a new Board majority was formed and a change in College senior leadership took place shortly thereafter.

After our 2009 accreditation site visit, the College focused on and made great improvements in the area of administrative stability, shared governance, and transparency. The Shared Consultation Council (SCC) was created, and it developed written processes for consultation and collaboration of all College constituent groups in shared planning and decision-making. The SCC created the "Ground Rules for Civility" to guide the improvement of respectful discourse in all modes of communication. SCC standing committee structures are working well, and they are in a state of continuous improvement. A Diversity and Equity Committee, housed under the auspices of the Employee Services (formerly Human Resources) Division, was formed with the purpose of fostering cultural competence among employees as the College works to support the needs of a diverse student population and community. This committee focused on College hiring practices and the employee demographic composition as represented in the student population served by the College. Through efforts of the Diversity and Equity Committee and the Staff Development Coordinator, a clear emphasis on cultural competency was included in the Staff Development Plan. Efforts to improve campus morale, cultural competency, and the creation of an inclusive work environment are part of a continuous and collaborative College wide effort.

While the College has made great strides in improving transparency and administrative stability, it recognizes the need for the development of a formal short-term and long-term plan that outlines the specific goals and objectives necessary to institutionalize the values of respect, trust, and multicultural competency within the College community. Over the years, the College has periodically engaged in short-term initiatives designed to improve campus morale; however, these efforts were often individually, or small group, driven and as such they did not lead to sustainable improvements. In the past five years, results of several campus climate surveys indicate areas of improvement with regard to employee morale.

Therefore, it is imperative that College employees work collaboratively to address the needs identified in the campus climate surveys with sustainable solutions. In 2011 morale rose after the change in leadership; however, in the surveys conducted in 2012, 2013, and 2014 morale declined and remained flat. In 2014 and 2015 the College used a new survey instrument and results remained low. Given the understanding that there is a connection between campus morale and a positive learning environment, through this Actionable Improvement Plan (AIP) the College is committing to creating and sustaining an environment of respect, trust, inclusion, and

multicultural competency. This will be accomplished by expanding the efforts and resources dedicated to this goal.

This AIP will result in development of a long-term plan that includes recommendations for training, improvements to hiring practices (including recruitment and outreach strategies), and integration of multicultural competence into decision-making. The purpose of this systemic integration is to create an environment of trust and mutual respect where accountability is accepted and expected. The plan will include timelines to implement recommended actions, as well as to collect and compile information for formative and summative evaluation to determine impact and plan further improvements.

The College has in place policies, procedures, and codified practices that address grievances for both students and employees. However, as part of the College's dedication to continuous improvement the institution will initiate a review of the processes that are in place. This will include the development of an awareness campaign which would enhance the understanding of the policies, procedures, and codified practices that are in place. The intention would be that greater transparency leads to more effective conflict resolution. Appropriate Cabinet members will be charged to implement these improvements and to evaluate the effectiveness of the improvements.