



**LARAMIE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Joe Schaffer

MEMORANDUM

TO: LCCC Board of Trustees

FROM: Dr. Joe Schaffer, President

CC: LCCC President's Cabinet

DATE: February 18, 2015

RE: Mid-Year Update on Personal Goals

In the following, I would like to update you on my FY15 (2014/2015) personal goals. You may recall that we collectively set these goals this past July, at which time you asked me to update you some time during mid-year on progress towards their achievement. Please accept this memorandum as a fulfillment of your request. Also, as in the past, I want to note that the nature of my position at the College is such that achieving any meaningful goals we set for me personally cannot be accomplished without the significant work and contributions of so many others at LCCC. Therefore, it would be inappropriate, and perhaps foolhardy, to try and lay singular claim to the efforts and outcomes of the individuals and groups who are helping accomplish the goals. I would like to believe though, that I help create an environment and atmosphere where the work leading to these outcomes can happen, and I have personally contributed where it has been appropriate and I have been able.

FY15 Personal Goals Mid-Year Update

1. Improve Internal Communication and Messaging

It has been stated many times by many individuals that communication is never perfect and it can always be worked on, especially in times of change. That certainly holds true here at LCCC, and while we are working hard to improve, there is still more to do. I do want to share some of the things I and others have been doing to help improve internal communication. One of the most visible changes have been my Campus Video Updates, a concept that originated from a chance meeting with a couple of faculty one afternoon. I have tried to provide brief, yet targeted communication on a variety of bigger issues pertaining to the College to help offer a "bigger picture" of the things that are happening. In addition, and again based on the great recommendations of others, this time the Staff Senate Leadership, I have been holding "Brown Bag" meetings with faculty and staff around campus that provide opportunities for interaction between me and the campus. Just one positive outcome of these is the things I learn as a result!

There are numerous other things we have been and continue doing to improve communication. These range from ensuring that all departments and schools are meeting on a reoccurring basis, the centralizing the location of meeting notes and minutes to the appropriate communities in Eagle's Eye, continuing my normal meetings with all divisions on campus, and of course sending my notes from the President's Desk to you. In other areas, Dr. Josè Fierro has created an academic affairs updates website (<http://eaglesacademicaffairs.com/>) to update the campus on what is happening there, Dr. James Malm has established weekly AVP briefings for the Albany County Campus, Peggie Kresl-Hotz and Human Resources have established numerous trainings, resources, and request and response processes (more on that below), and the President' Cabinet as a whole has committed to timely and consistent communication to their teams on actions taken by the executive team.

We will continue to do more this spring. For example, we have some good insight from the recent Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey that may suggest it isn't the availability or access to formal communication, but perhaps the way we informally communicate (e.g., interpersonal, active listening, etc.), and how we do or don't stop to consider who else might need timely information about things that are happening closer to the front lines of the organization. We will be looking at ways to develop this awareness in all employees across campus.

2. Improve Human Resource Functions and Responsiveness

Although I may still hear the occasional rumbling regarding the operations of Human Resources, I am starting to see this more as an echo from the past or a traditional opportunity for people to express frustration they are feeling regarding our changes in this area and not in the functionality or responsiveness of HR. I want to personally commend all of the individuals in Human Resources for their focus on improving customer services. For example, under Executive Director Peggie Kresl-Hotz's leadership, we have launched numerous opportunities for engagement with the campus to better understand and navigate HR functions. The training materials and opportunities provided by her staff, such as new employee orientation, screening committee training, hiring manager training, job description development, recruitment processes, and HR information requests, are top-notch.

Specifically in regard to responsiveness, Human Resources has put in place structures that allow for the most direct contact with the person or resource to help the requestor, are committed to response to requests within a specific timeline, and they have incorporated evaluation processes in their various functions to capture "customer satisfaction" and suggestions for improvement. We have tackled the issue of job descriptions head-on, are building the capacity for more timely and more accurate data regarding our workforce, and have established a stronger outreach to assist the campus with major HR-related business problems. For example, Peggie has worked directly with many of the administrative assistants in the academic areas to establish a more effective and efficient way of accurately creating hiring and appointment materials for adjunct faculty each semester. This will take a major burden off of our administrative assistants.

3. Reinvent the College's Program Offerings to be Designed for Student Success

I am feeling particularly proud of the work towards this goal, although I have to be quite honest in that I have had nearly nothing at all to do with what has been done or is being done this spring. Nearly two years ago we began this journey, but not in a way that people would have recognized as setting the stage for one of the most significant reinventions of the academy. We began by establishing the expectations for our programs within Degrees and Certificates Policy 2.1 and

Procedure 2.1P by shifting the primary oversight to a renewed committee of faculty and academic leaders (the new Academic Standards Committee), followed again by a focus on redesigning the general and liberal education expectations for the College. Each of those actions set the stage for the work that has occurred and is occurring this year.

This brings us to present day. Under the leadership of Crystal Stratton (Communications Faculty) and Dean Terry Harper (Health Sciences) along with support from Dr. Fierro, Kari Brown-Herbst (Center for Teaching and Learning), and Melissa McAllister (Center for Teaching and Learning and ESL Faculty) and the efforts of so many others, we are in the process of a curriculum evolution to establish programs with a focused, outcomes-based general education core, clearly designed and published course sequence, all built on a foundation of a strong curriculum. By the end of this spring our programs will be designed to emphasize clear, coherent pathways for students to see where they begin and where they will successfully complete. I don't believe anything will have as profound an impact on student success at LCCC than this work.

4. Continue to Advance the "Building Forward" Facilities Plan

My response here will be brief as I know most of you are aware of our progress on our building efforts. While we continue to run into challenges with our Student/University Center project and even though this project is consuming a large part of many individual's time, I believe we are moving through those as best we are able. The Flex Tech project is moving ahead very smoothly and is on budget and on target with the established timeline. We are still looking to have both buildings ready for Fall 2016.

This past fall we established a steering committee for the Fine and Performing Arts Building, have engaged in meaningful work over the fall, and are continuing this spring to identify programming goals, approaches, and needs. This information will be the foundation for the prospectus we will write on this project. Later this spring, and using that prospectus, we will engage the services of an architect to help us complete the Level I plan for the building. This plan will be used to start the building request process through the WCCC's CapCon model.

Our other planned renovations continue to advance through the authorization processes of the Legislature. Our campus gateways are all but completed with the final element to be installed this spring now that we have a design to match the new signage on campus. And speaking of new signage, we will have prototype elements installed on campus this spring to kick off the installation phase of our wayfinding project. I know this has not moved as quickly as some of you may like, but we are committed to doing this right and still meeting your expectations for seeing new signs on campus this spring and summer.

5. Develop Mechanisms to Better Implement, Manage and Monitor the Strategic Plan

The College's strategic plan is quickly becoming integrated within most all of our major institutional processes, as well as the various activities and work being conducted across the campus. At your recent retreat many examples were presented of how this is occurring. At the institutional level we have also been making some solid progress. One of the major accomplishments from this fall has been the launch of the LCCC Strategic Plan Website (www.lccc.wy.edu/StrategicPlan), which is the primary mechanism for communicating the plan, reporting on progress, and celebrating successes. This entire site is the product of the hard work of our web master Aimee Inama and an LCCC alumna and relatively new employee in Public Relations, Nathan Hueseth. We will continue to update the site and develop new elements to communicate our plan.

The other element we are working on to aid in the implementation and monitoring of strategic plan strategies and activities is a project management process for the College. This has actually been a work in progress for some time, and we are now starting to see it coming together. Much of the early work on this project was led by Julie Gerstner, our business analyst in Student Services, and more recently she has had great assistance from Chief Technology Officer Chad Marley, Director of Grants and Contracts Victoria Steel as well as Institutional Effectiveness Associate Vice President Kim Bender. We hope to have this process integrated into the Aquila online system and will be aiming to have some of the major strategic plan strategies using the process this spring. Ultimately, we believe having an institutional process for how we implement and manage major projects will improve our ability to keep the campus informed about changes in progress and also focus our human effort on continued progress to completion of our most important initiatives.

6. Make Substantial Progress on the Assessment of Student Learning

We are making significant progress on student learning assessment, something with which the College has consistently struggled over a decade. However, with a commitment to this work and the investment in people and structures to carry it out, we are at the precipice of breaking through. For example, we have now completed multiple semesters of administering and collecting student learning data from common course assessments that assess the level of proficiency students have in demonstrating the College's institutional learning outcomes (e.g., written and oral communication, problem solving, etc.). This work has been shepherded primarily by the Student Learning Assessment Committee (SLAC) comprised of DeeJaay Beals (Business, Ag and Technical Studies), Trent Morrell (Math & Science), Eric Quade (Math at ACC), Paula Badgett (Ludden Library), Dusty Day (Arts & Humanities), Molly McNeely (Health Science and Wellness), Melissa McAllister and Kari Brown-Herbst (Center for Teaching and Learning), and Tim Kochery (Center for Learning Technologies).

In addition, we are making great progress in establishing a systematic approach to assessing student learning at the program and course levels. Under the leadership of Dr. Kim Bender and after many long hours of work last summer and fall, we have established an online system for the centralization of assessment plans (as well as program review, but more on that later). The system is called Aquila and is powered by a technology from Campus Labs. During in-service activities this January, faculty from all programmatic areas spent time initiating their plans for assessing student learning at the program level. Of course this is just the start as we still have the work ahead of us to collect evidence of student learning and use those data to help us improve our programs and instructional effectiveness.

7. Implement Methods for Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review

This spring we launched a major overhaul to the College's academic program review process. Our first programs are going through this new process as I type this, and faculty are navigating it quite well. The process isn't perfect, but rarely are major implementations. However, we believe with its online interface in the Aquila system, criteria aligned with our accreditation standards, and a focus on continuous improvement, co-curricular program review is on the right track. The new program review process is a testament to the vision and hard work of Dr. Bender, who spent countless hours leading the design of the process as well as establishing the online platform for conducting the reviews. Dr. Bender brought a vast expertise in program review from his time at CSU, and he is building from that to help us here at LCCC.

Dr. Bender is also leading the early work in establishing a sister process for the review of our non-academic or co-curricular programs and services (e.g., advising, student life, etc.). This is currently one of the College's published action projects that are required as part of our participation in the Higher Learning Commission's AQIP (Academic Quality Improvement Program) pathway for institutional accreditation. I anticipate this process will be ready for implementation this summer or early next fall. Again, I have to thank Dr. Bender for his leadership in this work.

8. Continue to Improve and Add Needed Policy and Procedures

Our policy and procedure work continues and we are making progress in establishing new policies and procedures that are missing, as well as transitioning older ones from their existing format and updating them as needed. As I have mentioned in the past, I am very proud of the College's online policy and procedure manual (available at <http://policies.lccc.wy.edu>) and how it continues to develop.

Some of the good work the College has been doing this year includes the launch of our first major policy and procedure for the request and review of student fees, academic program review, scholarships and waivers, updates to academic standards, and numerous others. We still have work to do in completing our HR policy and procedure work with updates to our compensation and performance management policies and procedures, as well as ones pertaining to curriculum and program development and approval. Overall, though, we continue to make strong progress in framing our institutional processes through documented policy and procedure.