VALENCIACOLLEGE
East Campus
2018-2019

Divisional Strategic Planning Brief – Learning Support

Campus Outcome: East and Winter Campus 5 Year Plan (August 2015 – July 2020)

Goal 13. Work with college-wide academic and student affairs partners on building relationships and strengthening collaboration to achieve desired goals and objectives.

Department Outcome: Learning Support Unit Plan (2018/19)

Goal #4. Consolidate tutoring, Supplemental Learning, and CARE+ programs to form Learning Support Center for the purpose of improving efficiency and effectiveness of these programs. **Note:** this goal was reimagined early in the year with a focus on reorganizing leadership and department structures within the division to support the college's growth, and to increase the effects of high-impact practices throughout the system.

BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION

During the March 7, 2018 Executive Council meeting a panel of Senior Team members were questioned about the state of the College and its plans for the future. At that time someone from the audience asked Dr. Shugart the following question; *'as we continue to grow in size and scope and add campuses throughout the region of Central Florida over the next five to ten years, how will we maintain our unique culture, and remain one Valencia College?'* This question, and Dr. Shugart's response, served as the clarion's call to the Dean's of Learning Support and we began working towards a new collaborative leadership style that would respond to this charge and impending demand.

In response to the question raised Dr, Shugart acknowledged the challenges that rapid growth presents, then highlighted the cultural tenets of the College that must be maintained; being learning-centered, putting students first, striving for community, and adhering to our mission as one Valencia College. He also proceeded to give examples of current cases where he saw departments working well together across the College such as in the Math department, and provided examples where he saw room for improvement like in the division of Learning Support. His reference to our inability to articulate a unified strategy around goal development and shared practices served as the impetus for new thinking and a new approach to our

organizational leadership. We could not deny that in some areas like; Library Services and Learning Support (tutoring) we had certainly become "siloed" and campus-focused in our leadership and planning, and that we were unfamiliar with the goals and strategies being employed on each others campuses. However, there was one shining example of college-wide collaborative work that we could point to, learn from, and build upon, and that was the New Student Experience (NSE) program. For the last seven years we worked together closely on the development of a curriculum to ensure that all new students would have a consistent experience regardless of the campus they attended. We were highly collaborative in the oversight of every aspect of the NSE program. From the hiring of faculty and the development of a formal training process to the creation of learning outcomes and the development of a strategic enrollment plan. Although, we were slightly disheartened to have our department singled out publicly as an example of systems inefficiency, we quickly realized we had an opportunity to build upon a model that was working within our division and spent the last year responding to the call to do so.

The first step in establishing a collaborative leadership model was to design principles for the new way of working together. We knew we were on the right path when the principles began to quickly emerge and there was unanimous agreement about them. This was not a frequent occurrence so it was very affirming. The principles that would serve as the foundation for our collaborative leadership model were the following:
1. Provide a common experience for students across the college
2. Develop College-wide goals and strategies
3. Increase efficiencies and share resources
4. Improve communication throughout the division college-wide
5. Focus on innovation and collaboration
6. *Leave space for campus-based decision making and honor unique needs of campuses

With our principles established, next we needed to develop a framework for our leadership model. We loosely used the model below which is based on Christopher Matlow's 5 F's of Organizational Architecture - https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-fs-organizational-architecture-christopher-martlew
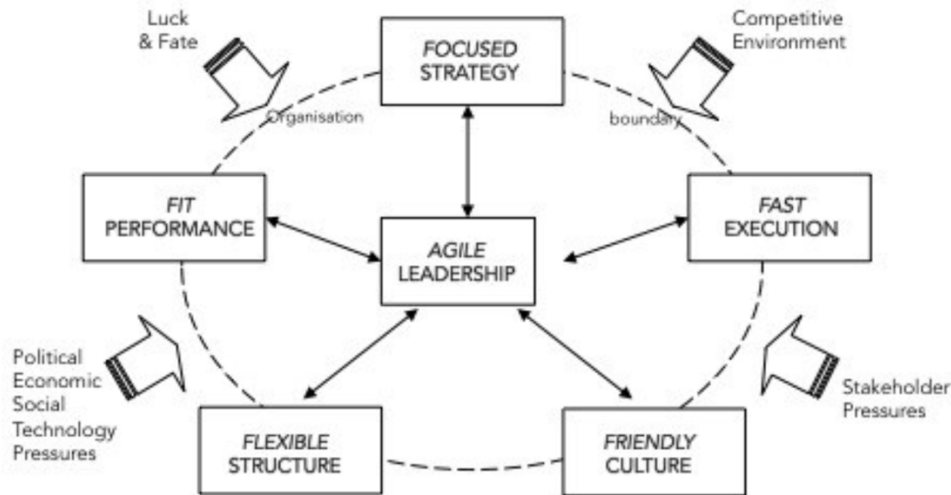
The 5 "F's" Matlow discusses in his book; *"Changing the Mind of the Organization"* are:

- **Focused** Strategy (develop shared vision and purpose – ONE Valencia College)
- **Fast** Execution (build momentum, don't impede progress, respond quickly)
- **Flexible** Structure (be responsive to college demands, community needs)
- **Friendly** Culture (employ the Peace and Justice Principles – Establish Trust)
- **Fit** Performance (make data informed decisions)

Initially, we decided that to be most effective at college-wide management that we would need to divide and conquer. Our division had simply become to large and complex. We each had responsibility for a number of niche programs and services like grants (i.e. Title 5), and community programs (i.e. Covenant House). Trying to join forces in the management of all of the programs that went above and beyond our primary departmental responsibilities would simply become untenable. So, we decided to become focused and organized the division into its three primary areas; Library Services, Tutoring, and NSE. Most of the other programs, projects or initiatives we managed could fall into one of these areas. After determining that we would focus our Collaborative Leadership Model and Management Framework around these three areas we needed to decide which of the three Deans of Learning Support (DLS) would serve as a "leader" for each area. Yet again, it was apparent that we were on the right track as this too was an easy and agreeable decision. Landon Shephard was assigned to NSE because of the work he was supporting in the area of NSE curriculum development, Karen Reilly was assigned Tutoring because of the Academic Initiative Review (AIR) work she led the year prior, and Leonard Bass was assigned Library Services because of the Open Educational Resources (OER) and Emerging Technology work he was supporting on his campus.

With the principles developed, the management framework established, and now the roles assigned, we were ready to present our "new" collaborative leadership model to our Campus teams. In truly Valencia fashion, our best laid plans began to quickly morph after listening

sessions and considerable solicited feedback. The first challenge we faced was in the name "collaborative leadership model". This was confusing to our teams and seemed to imply that we were becoming college-wide deans over the departments we were assign ourselves. We spent a considerable amount of time over the Summer of 2018 reassuring our staff that we were changing reporting or reassigning people to Deans on other campuses. Secondly, we learned that there was concern that this new model would have the opposite effect of its intended purpose and there would be "siloing" of departments and reduced communication and access throughout the division. Lastly, there was significant concern that there would be less support at the campus-level for departments that a dean is not assigned to.

After considerable discussion and processing of the feedback received, the DLS agreed to make some changes to the model and called a college-wide meeting on August 20, 2018, for all full-time staff in the division. The purpose of the meeting was to report back on the feedback received about the model and to discuss strategies for success as a division. At the meeting we presented the new term we would agree to use for the collaborative leadership model – **The Year of Connection.** The new term responded to some of the concerns raised about leadership change, and it represented the flexible nature of our model and the intent to be friendly in our approach. We reassured our staff that our roles as deans of the division of learning support would not change at the campus-level and that we would continue to provide leadership for all three departments within the division. However, what would change is our focus and connection to our assigned departments college-wide. We explained that over the next year (2018/19) we would launch a new "pilot" called the **Year of Connection** where we would organize ourselves by department and agree to serve as college-wide facilitators for each area. We used the principles to focus our teams, and shared the discussion from the Executive Team meeting on March 7th to explain the need for the new leadership model.

STRATEGIC RESULTS

Since launching the **Year of Connection** pilot on August 20, 2018, the Division of Learning Support has realized a number of significant outcomes. Most importantly there has been a shift in mindset from provincial campus-based motivation to college-wide priority. We have established and adhered to bi-weekly meetings that now have a college-wide department focus rather than a scant report on campus-based activities. Some highlights from each area include:

NSE:
- College-wide redesign of the co-curricular requirement for NSE. New Student Experience students will participate in Co-Curricular programing through exploration of Support Services where they will develop awareness of college support systems; as well as evolving their college, self and/or career options. (see appendix material)
- Analytics Brief – developed in partnership with the new Office of Data, Analytics and Planning. (Report in appendix)
- Redesign of the Academic Blueprint Assignment.

Tutoring (Learning Support):
- Developed a College-wide Tutor Training Framework in response to findings from the Academic Initiative Review (AIR) conducted for Tutoring services in 2017. (see appendix)
- Created a College-wide Marketing Strategy to support branding and recognition of services regardless of campus location. One of the most significant outcomes of this work was the renaming of all the tutoring areas throughout the college to Learning Support Centers (LSC).
- Evaluation of online tutoring services. After 5 years of using Smarthinking as our online tutoring platform the LSC Managers agreed to conduct an environmental analysis of online tutoring platforms to ensure we were using the most effective tool on the market.

Library Services:
- Conducted research on the impact of library services and the national standards for appropriate Librarian to FTE Ratios. (see appendix)
- Developed E-Resources Selection Criteria to ensure digital collection meets the needs of faculty and students. (see appendix)
- Librarians formed college-wide OER Taskforce to develop OER Labs for the college. (see attached)

REFLECTION

Overall, one of the most meaningful outcomes of this initiative has been the impact that it has had on the faculty, staff, in the division of Learning Support. We quickly went from not knowing each region's Campus Plans to being co-creators of goals and objectives for each of the departments that make-up the Division of Learning Support at the College. The Year of Connection (YoC) model was designed with growth in mind, but it also reinforces some of Valencia's most important cultural tenets like; a deep commitment to collaboration, recognizing the value of connection and direction (not just for student but for faculty and staff as well), and the importance of trust, strong relationship (personal connection) and shared purpose.

Over the last year the DLS have had to work through some very challenging budget, staffing and reorganization issues. We have seen three members of our NSE Steering Committee either move into new roles or leave the College (Kathleen Plinske, Susan Ledlow, and Kim Sepich,). Through all of the organizational change we experienced, and in our department led, we have been able to launch new initiatives, analyze our work at a high-level and ensure stability within our divisions in the midst of significant college leadership change. There has also been a noticeable shift in the opinions and attitudes towards the needs of our "sister" campuses within the division that are starting to transcend the campuses.

We still have quite a bit of work to do to deepen our commitment to each other and the system, rather than department or campus needs, but we are certainly on the right track and have created a framework that will support growth and a one-college mindset. We have found that "great things happen when an organization is well-architected" and that successful and

healthy growth will not happen by accident. Our Campus President's have also served as excellent guides and advisors throughout the process of realignment during the Year of Connection, and the staff have really seemed to enjoy working together across campuses. Moving forward we will be exploring opportunities to foster greater synergy across departments within the division and working to practice this at the College-level.

NEXT STEPS
- Administer Survey of the Year of Connection (YoC) in August 2019
- Share survey results with Division of Learning Support at meeting in October 2019
- Make necessary enhancements/adjustments to Collaborative Leadership Model (YoC)
- Identify 1-2 initiatives that division is uniquely positioned to lead that will have a positive impact on College Goals developed by Dr. Plinke's Student Outcomes report.

APPENDIX – SUPPORTING MATERIALS
- Co-Curricular Exploration Framework
- Analytics Brief 19-03: New Student Experience Evaluation
- College-wide Tutor Training Framework
- Library Staffing Research Report
- RFP for "new" Online Tutoring