Making Extraordinary Things Happen in Institutions

The 14th Cohort of the Consortium Leadership and Renewal Academy (CLARA) held its first regular meeting on October 10, 2014 at Cedar Valley College.

Highlights of the event were keynote addresses by Cedar Valley College President Jennifer Wimbish and Associate Vice President for Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness Karen Laljiani.

Participants were divided into two teams and split into breakout sessions moderated by CLARA Director Christine Hubbard and CLARA Coordinator Gerald Stanglin.

The session wrapped up with a discussion of individual projects and group work.

The next meeting is November 14, 2014 at Kilgore College Devall Ballroom.

Leadership Lessons from Cedar Valley College

Cedar Valley College President Jennifer Wimbish and Cedar Valley College Associate Vice President for Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness Karen Laljiani discuss how it’s done at their college. (Page 2)

Leadership Practices in Review

Gerald Stanglin, CLARA Coordinator, and Christine Hubbard, CLARA Director, lead discussions on leadership practices and the leadership strengths of the CLARA class. (Page 3)
Leadership
Lessons from
Cedar Valley
College President
Shares College’s Four
Pathways for Students

Cedar Valley College President Jennifer Wimbish welcomed the CLARA class to her campus in the opening keynote address. Her presentation offered interesting facts about Cedar Valley, and outlined the school's four pathways for student success.

- Completion to Degree
- Certificate to Jobs
- Entrepreneurships to Self-owned Businesses
- Continuing Education to Jobs

Under Dr. Wimbish's leadership, Cedar Valley College has grown to become a premiere educational institution. Enrollment has grown from 2,500 in 2003 to more than 7,000 in 2014.

Dr. Wimbish is focused on community outreach. She has a specific goal of recruiting more veterans and adults to the school. Her outreach methods include winning workforce grants, as well as finding contributors from the private sector.

Goal Number One, says Dr. Wimbish, is student success. She stresses the importance of community colleges preparing people in the community for the workplace. She believes community colleges have not been as successful in this area as they should be, citing the fact that most jobs are going to students from 4-year institutions rather than from community colleges. That is a trend she wants to change.

Cedar Valley College has also attained a perfect score from SACS-COC, which is an achievement other have envied. Dr. Wimbish has been asked to share how the college has achieved such a distinction.

Strategic Planning is an Ongoing Effort

Achieving excellence doesn’t happen by accident. Reaching goals as an institution requires a significant effort in strategic planning. Dr. Karen Laljiani, Associate Vice President for Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness at Cedar Valley College provided a brief overview of the process her college uses to develop their strategic plans.

Cedar Valley utilizes a three-year rolling strategic plan, said Dr. Laljiani, so the college is always looking at least three years down the road.

The strategic plan is shaped by the college's mission and vision statements. All planning must conform to and advance the overall mission of providing exemplary teaching and learning experiences while strengthening communities.

With that mission and vision in mind, strategic goals are formulated. Within those goals, a one-year action plan for the coming school year is developed. Dr. Laljiani said planning for the coming year often begins as soon as the current year starts, then gets underway in earnest in the spring semester.

The College Action Plan incorporates the action plans of the various college divisions, which in turn affect and are influenced by department action plans.

All planning incorporates the college's values, which were developed through direct input from more than 150 employees of the college.

Budgets reflect goals, priorities and plans and are usually made at least a year in advance.
Leadership Practices Inventory

How Comfortable Are You In Leadership?

CLARA participants were given a self-assessment questionnaire concerning comfort levels with various areas of leadership. The results were evaluated and presented in a concurrent session.

I am clear about my philosophy of leadership:

- Very High
- High
- Neither
- Low
- Very Low

All participants in CLARA come with their own strengths and weaknesses. We all have different areas of interests, and individual personalities.

Finding our niche involves evaluating our strengths and comfort levels. Each member of the CLARA cohort for this year answered questions on a survey to help determine comfort levels with differing aspects of leaderships. The results of the survey help us identify those in the group who will be good resources when it comes to exploring the characteristics of leadership.

Christine compiled the survey results and presented the outcomes in her Leadership Practices Inventory session. The session identified key individuals as “Super Resources” for the five practices of leadership covered in this year’s textbook.

Gerald led a concurrent session covering the qualities of the leadership practices that the CLARA class will cover in the coming year.

The CLARA class identified themes and concepts that they associated with the Leadership Practices of Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, and Encouraging the Heart.

Group discussion added an additional dimension to the topics and all CLARA members were given an opportunity to participate in the conversation.
CLARA in Action