Communication is Key

The CLARA group visited Trinity Valley Community College for the April meeting.

Campus President Glendon Forgey welcomed the group to Trinity Valley Community College and discussed his leadership style with the CLARA participants. A leadership panel discussion, moderated by Michael Felty, included vice presidents Mike Abbott, Jerry King, Jay Kinzer, Jean McSpadden, and Mary Nicholson.

After the panel, CLARA participants were given the option of touring the IT Department and Learning Resource Center, touring Student Services, or participating in a panel discussion with leaders from the college.

After lunch, Group 7 used Poll Everywhere and asked the CLARA class to provide one or two words to describe what collaboration meant to them. Group 8 included an abundance of their own personal experiences to illustrate how to strengthen others.

The next meeting is May 1, 2015 at Grayson College in Denison.
Trinity Valley Community College President Glendon Forgey addressed the CLARA group on the topic of becoming a college president as well as providing insights about his leadership style. Forgey discussed his journey to become a college president and informed the cohort that some people fall into the position while other people seek it out. Dr. Forgey says he realized he could handle the challenge of serving as a college president while serving in the role of Vice President for Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer.

“If we love our rules more than our students, we need to rethink things,” President Forgey stated, emphasizing the fact that student success is the number one priority of community colleges.

Dr. Forgey also stressed the importance of communication and believes that there is always room for improvement. He believes his vice presidents should ask questions to be sure that they understand what he is asking them to do.

As part of his presidential style, Dr. Forgey prefers “management by walking around,” moving around the college to meet with staff rather than isolating himself in his office. He also plays ping pong with students on a regular basis and is the reigning Trinity Valley Community College ping pong champion.

The TVCC leadership panel was represented by Mike Abbott, Vice President of Information Technology Services, Jerry King, Vice President of Instruction, Jay Kinzer, Vice President of Student Services, Jean McSpadden, Vice President of Administrative Services, and Mary Nicholson, Vice President for Institutional Advancement. Michael Felty, Professor of Physical Science and Chemistry, Honors Program Director, and CLARA alumnus, posed a series of questions to the panel regarding the leadership skills they possess and their current leadership styles.

The members of the panel provided insights on their experiences and varied paths to leadership as well as tips for the CLARA group on how to be effective leaders. A common response among all of the vice presidents was the importance of having the right people doing the right job and need to trust your people to do a good job. Perhaps the best piece of advice on how to be a good leader came from Dr. Forgey when he stated, “Treat your subordinates the way you want to be treated.”

Jean McSpadden, Vice President of Administrative Services, Mike Abbott, Vice President of Information Technology Services, Jerry King, Vice President of Instruction, Jay Kinzer, Vice President of Student Services, and Mary Nicholson, Vice President for Institution Advancement, answered questions regarding their leadership skills and styles.
Campus Tours

Trinity Valley Community College

The CLARA group was given the choice to tour the IT Department and Learning Resource Center, tour Student Services, or participate in a panel discussion with leaders from the college.

The Student Success Campus tour began with a visit to the Cardinal Success Center. The Success Center has experimented with extending business hours to 2 am for the students with great success. Computer and wireless access are available, as well as study space in a comfortable environment, which allows students to study together after hours. The tour also visited the advising office, where efforts have been made over the past few years to streamline and improve the advising and registration process. Staffing has been increased, and the needs of the student have become a higher priority than the policies and procedures of the organization.

Mike Abbott, Vice President of Information Technology Services at Trinity Valley Community College, took CLARA participants on a behind-the-scenes tour of TVCC IT. The group visited video services and spoke with videographer Jorge Palacios. Palacios produces all of the Trinity Valley Community College internal and promotional videos and manages streaming of videos and live broadcast of TVCC sports events. Next, Abbott guided CLARA students through the TVCC server room, which supports TVCC services on the Athens, Kaufman, Palestine, and Terrell campuses. Students then had the opportunity to experience a videoconference classroom TVCC uses to connect students on several TVCC campuses as well as those at local high schools and correctional facilities. Finally, the group visited the Learning Resource Center and toured its classroom space as well as online database access points and group study areas.

Michael Felty, Professor of Physical Science and Chemistry, Honors Program Director, and CLARA alumnus, Renda Garner, Director of Distance Education, Wendy Mays, Associate VP of Academic Affairs, and Kelley Townsend, Director of Dual Credit led a lively discussion regarding community college issues. Participants were able to share ideas and obtain knowledge from colleagues who face the same challenges every day.

CLARA participants tour the Cardinal Success Center as part of the Student Services tour (top).

Michael Felty, Professor of Physical Science and Chemistry and Honors Program Director, Kelley Townsend, Director of Dual Credit, Renda Garner, Director of Distance Education, and Wendy Mays, Associate VP of Academic Affairs participate in a panel discussion with the CLARA group (left).
Chapter 8: Foster Collaboration

Pamela Buenau, Sarah Lock, Fred Schmidt, Monica Stansberry, and Ami Stovall

Group 7’s presentation included a variety of videos and personal stories to highlight collaboration and teamwork.

The presentation also included an activity where groups of participants had to close their eyes and count from 1 to 10 without talking over one another. If two people said the same number at the same time, the group had to start over.

The group ended their presentation with a poll asking everyone to think about collaboration and to think of a few words to describe it. The majority of the answers included a form of teamwork and communication.

One main takeaway from Group 7’s presentation is that it is smarter to travel in groups (and minions are awesome).

“You’re missing it. This is not a one-man show.”

Chapter 9: Strengthen Others

Donna Hill, Eli Koenn, Leon Minor, and Russel Braga

Group 8’s presentation focused on how to strengthen others by helping them increase their self-determination and develop competence.

The presentation included a video on Leadership Lessons from Monsters University and individual life lessons which lead to an increase in self-determination. Russel shared a very personal story of how he repeated the third grade three times before advancing to the fourth grade. His resilience and self-determination at a young age is remarkable.

Participants were divided into small groups and discussed experiences which made them feel powerful or powerless. These experiences were then shared with the entire group.

Group 8 stated, “You need to delegate authority and give others a chance to take responsibility.”

“Freely give what you have freely received.”

“Inspiration without collaboration is just a lot of great ideas that evaporate into the ether.”
CLARA in Action

“We should not only use the brains we have but all that we can borrow.”

Woodrow Wilson