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Background:
On November 1st, 2018, CLC held a “Capacity Café” facilitated by Achieving the Dream coaches. The session included an introduction to the Achieving the Dream (ATD) framework followed by small group discussions and sharing themes from the small group discussions. The café was an opportunity to discuss results of CLC’s Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool survey, which was completed by a group of faculty, staff, and administrators representing certain governance groups at the college.

The small group discussions at the café centered around the seven capacity areas in the ATD framework: Policies & Practices, Data & Technology, Engagement & Communication, Leadership & Vision, Equity, Teaching & Learning, and Strategy & Planning. Participants rotated between tables, with each table representing a different capacity area. Table captains were assigned to each of these capacity areas and led three rounds of small group discussions. In each round, groups discussed strengths, areas for improvement, and action steps relevant to the capacity area. The detailed notes from the table captains are presented below. These notes represent a comprehensive accounting of direct feedback from participants, not necessarily opinions shared by the table captains or by all participants. Summary results that highlight reoccurring themes within and across capacity areas are provided in another document called “Capacity Café Summary Notes” available on the IEPR website.
Policies and Practices

Strengths:

- Connection is a strength, is it noteworthy that 10 respondents didn’t know?
- What does connection mean? Orientation, recruitment, academic planning, orientation and relationship with high schools
- HS Alliance → recent alignment with alliance high schools is a strength for CLC
- Transition to 4-year schools and to workforce
- ↘ 2 different items in one score. Group members did not like this.
- What’s the split between these question scores?
- ↘ workforce: a lot of respondents don’t know
- ↘ transfer: better awareness. There is a lot of information about Guaranteed Transfer Admissions (GTA)
- Is this because people know about them because we promote them so much?
- We don’t promote workforce connection in the same way as GTA. This is an area of opportunity to improve
- So many students in career, but we aren’t as well developed in this area
- But if the respondents knew about career connections, their opinion was strong and positive
- It was revealing that people didn’t know
- Is this measuring availability of internships?
- ICAT Q #5&6: Some strengths by program. prepare for career placement
- Policies and procedures are not in alignment with a strategic direction and these priorities
- Need to have our Policies & Procedures viewed though ATD lens
- Career advisory boards can lead to student success
- ↘ They are known to people who participate in them
- Career advisor boards have been historically for networking / coffee club, but they need to improve and have a student success focus (alignment)
- We do a lot of events to engage students / welcome in 1st year (good practice)
- We do a LOT of things
- Mandatory student orientation was a positive
- Adjunct / full time faculty orientation helps impact student success. Mandating faculty orientation is good!
- We are good at coming up with things but participation is low → we have no buy-in, so it won’t be effective. Need more mandatory requirements for things to be implemented successfully (staff and faculty)
- Students realize we are here for them. They see the community college mission and they value CLC ↘ students may not know where to go for help
- Great at trying new ideas and coming out of silos to connect with students
- The “script” of CLC is beginning to shift in a positive way. External stakeholders are seeing a change and feeling differently about CLC
- Working with communities more to engage them
Areas for Improvement:

- Stakeholders
- Low scores and I don’t know answers are a sign of communication issue
- Awareness of who stakeholders are and engaging them as stakeholders
- Don’t know answers among faculty is high
- Opportunity to improve communication to faculty
- **ICAT Question #9** – low scores and don’t knows on evaluation of policies and procedures
- Where does the information that is collected go?
- What happens after non-attendance is reported or alert is submitted?
- What happens with data we collect?
- We do things but don’t evaluate them/improve upon them
- Need to use data in decision making
- Sometimes we stop action if data tells us to do something controversial. We avoid the conflict instead of pushing through
- Make data informed decisions; if we have high quality data = high quality decisions
- Caseload management – barriers in place. For example, protection of student data, we are putting barriers in (strict FERPA interpretation) that are restricting conversation
- Legitimate educational interest (FERPA)→ people are not sure how to participate in shared retention efforts across departments
- Action: need to provide updated training on legitimate educational interest and what is ok communication under FERPA
- Look at the FERPA policy and rewrite it in a realistic and usable way
- Not just registrar to be responsible for FERPA (there is division responsibility too)
- A lot of IDK from people out of educational affairs and student development; one survey respondent looked at section 400 in policy manual while answering this question to see what they were.
- Gaps in what’s in our board policies contribute to “don’t know” answers
- Comment that policies are board approved and difficult to change
- PR improvements- radio, draw students from Chicago for Quickstart, on TV, seeing more PR with diversity
- Look at policies and practices and evaluate them. Do people know them? Mapping everything out in a process map
- We need more process maps and documentation. Then we can assess them.
- Trial and error of data collection. look at data before implementation (not after the fact to support the decision after the fact)
- Having policy in place. We have good data but don’t know how to scale. Where to go? How to do this? Get resources?

Potential Actions:

- Don’t increase volume of communication, but focus and layer communication, timely communication, ease of access to info we need.
- People rely upon the use of informal networks – we need to move to a knowledge base, and find better ways to share
• Span of distribution is wide: a lot of work is needed in evaluating policies & procedures to insure they are meeting student needs. This is a long term system-wide effort. If done, it should improve “Don’t know” answers.
• Transfer and workforce are specific and separate. Participants felt that the scores for #6 & 8 tie together
• **Key takeaway: Relationship between job placement result and external stakeholders results should be top of mind for faculty
• We have career programs with advisory boards but it is not shared with outside areas. Share info between career and transfer faculty better
• Tease out faculty counselors from answers if possible
• Add career/ transfer faculty designation to survey respondent demographic questions to see if there is a difference in scores
• Break out results by category. Combining Q’s is misleading (ex. 5&6)
• Review policies on a schedule. How easy is it to find processes and outside of policies? Are there web issues?
• More lunch and learns about different internal areas to expand knowledge
• Create an “internal newsletter”
• Share info on what people do and provide connections on the web (less clicks to get what you need)

Other comments:
• Point of entry/ FYE: doing so many things in silos and boutique programs. Isolated. Practice is to pilot but not scale
• Less programs to impact more students
• Who decides which programs to scale? GCC, leadership? There might be conflicting interests – who decides? How is the decision made?
• Opportunity in question #8 I don’t know answers – engage faculty in how external stakeholders can be leveraged in their work (for non- career faculty)
• Opportunity: is it a practice or policy or procedure? Conduct a Procedure review that is student friendly
• Students try different people to get different results. Conduct an assessment of our practices. How do we interact with each other? We make a lot of referrals – “we don’t do that – go here instead”. Assign people to do things. Develop employee engagement but we need collaboration. We need to work across departments and not worry about who gets “credit” for completing something.
• Strength: we have a lot of practices to help students navigate
  • Are these high impact practices? Or are there unnecessary steps? Look at community colleges and what do they do as a model.
• Need a clear communication plan and a shared understanding of priorities. Don’t just keep adding to the list of things to do. If new items come up, then debrief on priorities; reassess. Then communicate changes. Define what the end result would look like so we all have the same understanding.
Teaching and Learning

**Strengths:**
- Teaching Learning and Educational Technology Center (TLETC)
- We have quality student success programs at CLC
- Dedicated faculty & staff
- Our faculty provide an excellent education to our students

**Areas for Improvement:**
- It’s telling how many people don’t know things like we have an accelerated learning program for developmental English students, or that each academic department has to use learning outcomes and engage in assessment, TLETC. We need to get out of silos and communicate what each area does and how we can support each other.
- ALL employees need to understand how to direct and guide students.
- Do we need streamlined processes across academic divisions? Which kinds of practices/tools can be used college wide? Like Gayle Miler’s project or syllabi – what standard items on our syllabi?
- Some colleges have a liaison for adjuncts to make sure that they have the same training and knowledge of the institution as full-time instructors.
- Culture of meetings – for example: division meetings could be more productive in terms of sharing, communicating, figuring out how to do what will help students succeed
- Communicating the value of engaging in different practices, have discussions and negotiations about what we need to do to get buy in. Some things, like blackboard, might be mandatory.
- Professional development options are great, but need to be more cohesively integrated.
- We have the infrastructure but need to think of equity for all faculty involved (full-time and adjunct faculty).
- We need help on how to help students: training, TLETC courses, etc. Administrators need to allow time for all employees to attend.
- Wonderful student success programs but not everyone knows they exist or what options might be best for their students.
- Wonderful opportunities for professional growth through TLETC but need to be offered at more times with all college groups in mind not just faculty.
- Wonderful and dedicated faculty/staff but there is a lack of communication about what everyone is doing.
- Need accountability for faculty
- Administrative support for faculty
- Lack of accountability – assessment
- Cap on adjunct faculty load leads to under investment
- Online student evaluations are NOT working. Very few people respond and student voice is missing in faculty evaluation.
- How can we get faculty and staff to care?
• Administrators don’t know enough about learning outcomes.
• There is faculty desire to improve but they need the mechanism. TLETC is underutilized.
• Vision- direction- ICAT question #1 is a very low number for administration and staff.
• Need steps to get faculty to buy in
• How can faculty be more equitable for student success?

Potential Actions:
• Need to communicate/ working in silo’s – all working in different directions, information about the data collected is not disseminated to all shareholders.
• Access to technology – library hours during summer
• Need streamlined process across academic divisions
• Administrative support for faculty in counseling to engage in TLETC offerings.
• Learning outcomes – make changes based on data to improve
• Dissemination of information- there is a need for reflection/time to reflect
• Full-time faculty mentoring adjunct faculty
• Need equity for adjunct faculty
• Adjunct faculty support
• Look at research on how to engage the adjuncts
• Professional development improvements
• Improve access to technology for faculty
• Establish a faculty peer for adjuncts
Data and Technology

**Strengths:**
- IEPR does great work
- IEPR doesn’t say no to any request (But maybe sometimes others take this for granted.)
- Lots of Data
- Data specific to programs can be provided
- Access to data and data warehouse
- Analyzing data on different departments
- Technology stays current
- We have data, even on participation and involvement of students
- Broad picture is understood through data
- Reports are available from IEPR’s website
- Data to know who is coming in

**Areas for Improvement:**
- Do people recognize they use data – in NADR and ADR
- We might be overwhelming people with data; data is accessible to high-level staff – but what do other staff get and know what to do about it
- More collaboration and transparency
- Stronger connection with IR and IT exists at other institutions
- SARS-IT sets it up but is it set up to get data out the right way?
- When do we get data from admissions? Who does what? What about query creation – the connect to IEPR is unclear
- Optimizing to use data is important.
- Autopsy data- maybe IT connection could help predict more – (Eg. Starfish, Blackboard) maybe link to help w/ leading indicator vs lagging
- Prioritizing data
- Thinking about data to understand the past or future, we are weak on future
- Achieving the Dream framework will help guide what we look at
- IT project list is long and takes a while
- Data consumers don’t know how to start and finish (close the loop on it and use the data)
- Data use
- How to take data to advance support services
  
  → not always contextualizing data to optimize for use
- Unclear on which decisions are made using data and how those are communicated
- Student success not driven by data
- Collaboration around data with those requesting it (don’t just give data and stop service there)
- Data overload
- Prioritize
- IT and IR could have more consulting roles
• Student success might be lower on the IT priority of projects currently (but should be higher)
• How to get technology out to those who need it to improve student success
• Data and technology in classroom to inform practices → yes helpful, because we don’t always know if students are struggling, the population changes, and the course is the same
• Lack of technology and not utilizing it at best capacity we could
• Not always prepared for new technology
• Meet needs of school based on data; directing
• Resources to do something with the data
• How to use data to improve student success efforts; no follow up
• Specifics applied to department → missing step is execution
• Does data inform AQIP projects
• Used data to inform new initiatives
• Need to have more consultative role (for both IEPR and Technology)

**Potential Actions:**

• Bump up student success on IT project list prioritization
• Prioritize and systematize efforts to streamline IT and data needs
• NADR process – required people to think about things they had not thought about before (this was good)
• IEPR could ask: what did you do with data? – this puts value back on the work – if using data
• Acknowledge we do it with ADR and NADR to make change
• Lack of priority and direction on what management should focus on for evaluation of programs/initiatives
• Make data corrections explicit in processes
• Prioritize what data we use
• Documenting data used to make strategy and decisions → or to prioritize
• Collaboration around data
• Balance between aggregated data and disaggregated
• More structure to using data
• Direct action items from data and do it by next meeting
• Accountability for using data
• AQIP projects identified by data
• Educate folks on policies
• Usage cuts on data
• Training on accessing and interpreting data
• Document data used for decisions
• Action based on data in meetings
• Training on data use
• Improve IT and IR connection
• Be explicit about how we use data

Other Comments:
• Some people knew the least about this capacity area (compared to others)
• Change in role at CLC has meant more awareness of IEPR (so knowledge about IEPR is not consistent across employee roles/groups)
• Wording of question #9 (about IT and IR connection) is difficult unless you work in those departments
• One size does not fit all for data needs
• Software to meet needs – more customized technology is not always moving us to accomplishing our goals
**Strategy/ Planning**

**Strengths:**
- Fresh leadership to integrate student success into all planning
- AQIP on strategic plan / engagement is happening
- Strategic plan has focus on student success
- Innovation Fund is available
- Board support
- Achieving the Dream
- Wellness is in values
- Plans are in place
- There’s a strategy but…
- President is presenting clear direction/ focus
- President listens
- Recognize that we need change
- Collect a lot of data
- Talk a lot about student success
- Have a student success plan – just developed
- CLC areas have separate operational and strategic plans
- Wellness of college staff/ faculty is a value
- Continuous improvement
- Focus on student success
- Have many groups or areas with student success plans
- Have many reports
- A new leader focused on strategic plan focused on equity

**Areas for Improvement:**
- Too many committees
- Need conscious decisions
- Lack of communication/ sharing even among administration/ faculty
- Strategic plan is not focused on student success
- Grant work/ accomplishment is not communicated
- Tracking of all plans is lacking
- Silos and need cohesion
- Same people involved, need new blood
- Need broad engagement
- No life/ work balance
- Lack of awareness of plans (overall; individual)
- Silos as a result of many plans
- Lack of cohesiveness/ integration of all plans
• Need training on strategic planning, action projects
• Communication of KPI’s
• No focus on high priorities
• Top down
• Lack of awareness
• Data not translated to actionable items
• Lack of cohesiveness and accountability of various operational/ strategic plans
• Need to implement improvement lessons
• So many committees can’t focus on one
• Lack of cohesive strategy
• Know what to do, but not how
• Lack of awareness of other committees’ work
• Surveys → don’t have action
• Duplicate services
• Need to consolidate, communicate, integrate into a cohesive plan

_Potential Actions:_

• Follow through with accountability, the student success plan
• Operationalize the strategic plan, focus on student success
• Communication path and defined and transparent with involvement
• Decision-making considers all constituents
• Better communication, collaboration and integration among the different planning groups/ committees
• Identify overlaps among committees/ groups
• Alignment of all plans to the focus of student success in the strategic plan
• Make everyone accountable by having goals for individuals/ departments/ etc.
• Set high priority student success goals and KPI’s
• Communication should be two ways
• Frontline people should be recognized as “valued”
• Implement an institutional annual action plan, debrief for accountability, follow ups.
• Implement a purposeful, intentional action plan with high priority initiatives.
• KPI’s are included; who’s accountable and how am I accountable.
• Commit and implement Achieving the Dream, which involves a group of individuals accountable, learning from peers, learning from outside best practices/ resources/ ideas.
• Improve engagement with communication.
• Improve internal communication; how’s the dissemination strategy; need consistency.
• Broader engagement of all consistencies; same people; need different voices.
• Budget planning should be tied to student success.
• Strategic plan is a dynamic living plan/ document.
• Provide tools/resources to make faculty/staff successful in helping students succeed.
• Be strategic in spending the innovation fund.
• Better intentional, strategic communication that is disseminated.
• Consolidate and integrate all area plans into one cohesive strategic plan focused on student success.
• Broaden engagement of staff/faculty/administration.
• Make the budget process intentional, purposeful, and focused on student success.
**Engagement and Communication**

**Strengths:**
- AQIP Employee Engagement Commitment
- Partnerships in place (High School Alliance, Advisory Boards, chambers)
- Faculty retention and student retention teams have communication efforts underway
- First two ICAT items rated high = internal
- Great enthusiasm for student success; shared “ownership”
- AQIP projects bring in diversity of perspective
- Good, independent student success resources already built
- Strong advisory boards
- Desire to know more and help others
- WOSC is identified starting point students
- Leadership communication about student success is positive, urgency felt
- Creating advisory boards around external stakeholders
- President “Chat with Lori” throughout semester to hear updates
- Continuous improvement in DNA- AQIP
- Enthusiasm for student success- want to know more and help
- Sense of urgency felt and appreciated
- Creating advisory boards with external stakeholders

**Areas for Improvement:**
- Avoid dead ends and empower all to take action
- External engagement not as coordinated as it should be
- Lack of external engagement across broad college community
- External community lost confidence in us- build up again
- Too many pockets of programs and silos; not communicating with each other about efforts; avoid duplication
- Rather do 5 things well vs 100 separate actions
- Too many committees doing similar work; need clear ownership
- When we move quickly, need to ensure we consider communication
- What are we doing with AQIP results after projects end? Not seeing college wide change or moving forward efforts; don’t feel connected to projects like in past
- Want leadership to be clear on priorities; shouldn’t do everything that’s recommended
- Want to build trust that sending students to a department/ service and they will be served well; hard to know who’s in departments now and what they’re doing
- Silos of work doing student success; worried about stepping on toes
- One system to communicate about students and/ or with students; streamline across entire college so we communicate same message
- Difficult to share info more broadly; related to all capacities
Front line staff pressured when there are many to serve; may know all info to be shared but can’t due to volume
Communicate across departments about career advisement board actions, recommendations, trends to capitalize on efforts
Find a balance between keeping up with information and status and accomplishing work/ doing job; find “sweet spot”; everyone can’t know everything (not realistic)
THEME: we’re confused on who does what so how do students feel?
Good @ emails, but need to improve and move things to action (ex. Admin council); how do we communicate action
Capitalize on momentum of student success and ensure sense of urgency and communication, happens across entire institution
Departments/ areas build practices and processes related to student success and they can create barriers in other areas for staff and/ or students
Leverage internal knowledge to build external partnerships (take SMEs with!)
Lack of connection between professor mentors (external) with CJPC (internal) and give us the concrete, evidence-based actions we can do to improve student success; put in one place
Want leadership to be clear on priorities
Give us concrete, evidence- based actions to improve student success = put in one place
Balance volume of knowing with doing job well

Potential Actions:

Inventory of partnerships; determine gaps; assign responsibility; create communication around work done
Invite community here to see CLC’s improvements
Find ways to build awareness of what’s happening; need better ways to create excitement
Build a definition of student success
Accountability and encouragement for people to embrace being a constituent of committees/ groups; need them to report back so information sharing/ knowledge building occurs.
Address all member email capabilities (filters) [ AQIP team addressing ]
Find better way to share student success resources we already have; helps create consistent messages
Enhance cross- training for front – line staff to improve accuracy of referrals
Consider staffing “front desk” by circle drive or remove desk [creates expectation]
End every committee meeting with summary, who needs to know what [ don’t leave without doing this ]; provide technology so it can happen in the moment
When processes/ practices change, ensure shared broadly
Engage alumni and connect to students
Tip: develop staff/faculty/student relationships to improve communications
• Find better way to share student success resources we already have
• Enhance/ alternative to all member email

Other Comments:
Feedback: take more time to plan; moving too quickly
Challenge: want perfection, missing opportunities to help students
Leadership and Vision

**Strengths:**
- New voices in leadership roles due to new employees
- Presidential support to student success
- Finances – support from the board of trustees (BOT)
- BOT playing strong role in student success
- Open dialogue encouraged across the college
- Strong culture of shared governance
- HLC review – very good
- Time for re – energizing (50th, new strategic plan, new president)
- Excited / passionate about future – great potential
- Fear of ideas or repercussion is diminishing with new president, freedom of expression
- Continuous improvement

**Areas for Improvement:**
- Sharing and using data to inform decisions
- Lots of work across the college that may not be connected across different levels of leadership
- Governance groups (classified, specialists, etc.) may be working autonomously. Leadership can send a “We are 1” across college.
- Communication across college
- All voices shared should be equal; culture of equity and equality across employee groups regardless of level, title, race, gender, etc.
- Faculty aren’t required to go above their teaching → more push from leadership (contract). Improve capacity with faculty. Faculty are key.
- Less faculty engagement if not required
- BOT using data to promote student success and sharing this across college
- Formalize and better communication on BOT role and data driven decisions and what decisions
- BOT visibility both physically and non-visibility
- Open dialogue not encouraged (all levels of administrators)
- Student success does not drive personnel decisions
- Accountability and data decision making
- Student perception of silos
- Turning great ideas to actions including right stakeholders
- Communication trickle down to all employees (listening, talking, all campuses)

**Potential Actions:**
- Put something in contract for faculty. Leadership accountability.
- Culture of “no drama”
• Governance group and CLT communication reports related to student success and feedback from college community
• Posting BOT materials should be more visible (data)
• “0” week provide materials on student success data
• Incorporate student success into every area of the college
• Build culture of student success
• Student success plan, organization design, and communication (e.g. sustainability)
• Intentional feedback from all employee groups
• AQIP employee engagement
• Fewer/conscious choices/priorities
• Mandatory leadership and training and accountability (e.g. 360 evaluations)
• Building a network of success for students and community
• Be bold versus pilot – driven
• Evidence-based models to raise persistence (e.g. FYE) with resources
• Do not ignore the data to invest in student success
• Capitalize on strengths of all 3 campuses and be bold on program developed at other campuses
Equity

**Strengths:**

- Individual commitment, hiring great people
- Enormous amount of data
- Recognition of meeting students where they are
- Value of credentials
- Reach out to community stakeholders
- Programs and services, close achievement gap
- Dr. “Lori” All campuses meeting students
- Guaranty programs
- Transfer, etc.

**Areas for Improvement:**

- Too many committees
- Too much data
- Determine needs for individual students
- Do our programs meet in a system? “So” many programs
- Only do what your job title is “a shut-down”
- How do we combine program and services together? No cohesion
- Not enough time to potentially learn for “students”
- Need guides → all CLC options
- High schools → too much focus on 4 year, not enough CLC
- We don’t know what CLC is doing for classroom equity
- Disconnect between what our students look like and what we do
- Be more intentional to stakeholders
- More info from feeder schools (only Waukegan and North Chicago dual enrollment)
- More focus on full time faculty
- Struggle and negative info
- High school → CLC
- Encourage “family” support
- Equity of “voice” classroom services
- Give staff (All) “time” for education
- Step up diversity training – we are ‘lame’, use more streaming technology
- Greater engagement of training and learning.
- All staff, redo faculty evaluation include priority
- Redefine ‘you are welcome here’
- Equity and diversity buzz words only
- No clear definition of equity across institution and there is a need to start a conversation about equity across the institution involving faculty, staff and students
- Students can sense the tension at CLC; centralize communication with students.
- There is a lack of trust, which impedes CLC from moving forward together. There needs to be better relationships.
The survey was not representative of CLC population. The survey needs to be emailed to everyone and have a group discussion.

**Potential Actions:**

- Institutional definition of equity
- Evaluate practices / policies 2-3 years
- More support for low staff support areas
- Take time – shared responsibility
- Educate everyone to be culturally sensitive
- Awareness and communication. What is equity? Diversity?
- Focus on middle schools, support with funding.
- Encourage communication, get students in programs or know about motivation
- Educate ‘family’ change 4 year focus. Reach out to future students. CLC strong
- Develop a plan – Cohesive outreach to middle school and HS
- Make equity part of the institution’s DNA and stop making general assumptions about students and employees and focus on finding out.
- Include the people who work with students when making decisions that involve student’s success or any college matter and there needs to be more weight on valuing the employee
- Stop duplicating services and work together on communicating the same information across campuses. Break the silos and embrace the different perspectives employees bring to the table.
- Make open-dialogue a part of CLC culture in where people are free to speak their mind and share ideas.
- There should be mandatory training for all employees, including administrators.
- The diversity council can serve as the formal entity that can coordinate all equity matters and have a designated leader to do so.
- Work on an equity definition as it relates to the institution and students with the employees and students’ perspective and how equity looks to them.
- Build student – faculty relationship and classroom space for students and faculty to share their experiences.
- Keep in mind that any changes that are required of faculty to do need to be within contract boundaries.
- Increase connection with students.