

Ventura County Community College District Partnership Resource Team (PRT) Process Summary Report Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative

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Areas of Focus

- A. Organizational Structure and Implementation Processes for District Services
- B. District-wide Support for Workforce and Economic Development
- C. District-Level Student Success Performance Metrics and Planning

Summary by Area of Focus

A. Organizational Structure

Ventura County Community College District had one major objective in their Innovation and Effectiveness Plan and four areas of particular focus within that objective:

1. Obtain organizational structure review services through a consultant including a summary report with recommendations
 - a. Focus: Human Resources (HR)
 - b. Focus: Grants,
 - c. Focus: Contracts
 - d. Focus: Institutional effectiveness and research

Progress

VCCCD's progress on this objective includes:

Completion of the Organizational Structure Analysis. The District hired the Collaborative Brain Trust (CBT) consulting firm to review and make recommendations on the organizational structure of the District and its colleges. During the analysis, CBT conducted interviews with constituent leaders and representatives, members of the Board of Trustees, and the senior management team; reviewed current and historical documents; compared VCCCD to similar multi-college districts; and analyzed surveys completed by 445 employees. The final report includes 23 recommendations and has been presented to the Board of Trustees. Participants in the follow-up meetings reported that the majority of the report aligned well with the PRT's findings.

At an Executive Team retreat, the recommendations were discussed and prioritized. Establishing the position of a Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness emerged as the top priority and an Interim has been hired. This new position is responsible for academic affairs and services, District program review, research, and external relationships.

Initial Steps on Improving Human Resource Processes. Human Resources staff have made substantial efforts to reduce cycle times for hiring; participants told the PRT that HR has worked steadily to reduce time-to-hire with process improvements and filling vacant positions in HR. The decision to hire a consulting firm for additional assistance has been made and the RFP was developed to align with District needs. A broadly representative working group established criteria for evaluating proposals. The focus areas for the work will include identifying best practices for HR and Personnel Commissions, increasing equity and diversity in hiring processes, and improving processes and systems. There continues to be interest in providing training to applicants on navigating the hiring process.

Website Redesign. District Services and the Colleges are working on a web overhaul that will focus on meeting the needs of users: employees, current students, potential students, and the community. Their intent is to improve communication with each of these user groups. The newly designed websites will soft launch in March with a full launch planned for May.

Discussions on Grants and Contracts. The District plans to conduct business process analyses on grants and contracts. They are considering whether to use consultants or undertake this work internally.

Suggestions for Sustaining Progress

- Broadly communicate the results of the CBT analysis and the subsequent prioritization of recommendations. Explore the concerns raised regarding gaps in the report, access to legal advice, and fulfillment of Title IX responsibilities.
- Work with the selected consulting firm to continue improvements in HR processes and systems.
- Conduct a user satisfaction survey after the rollout of the new website for the purpose of continuous improvement.
- When ready, move forward on the BPAs for grants and contracts.

B. District-wide Support for Workforce and Economic Development (WED)

Ventura Community College District had six objectives in their Innovation and Effectiveness Plan:

1. Clarify and establish the college and district roles and responsibilities related to Economic and Workforce Development (EWD) to increase effectiveness with the VCCCD internal and external stakeholders.
2. Develop processes and protocols to increase communication, collaboration and coordination with VCCCD internal and external stakeholders.
3. Review overall Career Education/EWD across the district and create a unified vision for the future.
4. Define/clarify the purpose of the CE (Career Education) Committee and adjust the membership and goals accordingly.
5. Integrate the voice of faculty and staff in all elements of CE and EWD.
6. Integrate faculty and staff to identify work/life balance issues specific to Career Education.

Progress

The District made significant progress in addressing the concerns expressed during the initial visits. VCCCD's progress on these objectives includes:

Creating a new District Services temporary position. The Interim Dean of Strategic Development, Partnerships and Planning has been filled with a dean from Oxnard College known for her collaborative approach. The additional support for the Colleges combined with collegiality has moved this initiative forward in a meaningful way.

Initial Planning for Workforce & Economic Development. While the Career Education Committee (CEC) has not been reactivated, the Career Education leaders at the college and district level are meeting and conducting planning. A collaborative approach to partnership development is being developed as part of the planning. One recommendation from CSEA Leadership was introduced during the meeting to use a tri-chair model (manager, faculty, and classified) for the re-established CEC.

The website redesign will include functions for matching employer needs with students and highlighting success stories. Participants reported that employees have embraced using data from multiple sources in addition to the Centers for Excellence. Presentations on the labor market have been made and priority sectors discussed. There is an overall desire to get data more specific to individual colleges and their services areas than the COE can provide. We also noted an interest in sharing a “data person” among the Colleges to increase capacity for data analysis and data-informed decision-making.

Improved Communication and Relationships. The atmosphere in the room when these leaders, including faculty, met with the PRT team was positive and collaborative, a distinct improvement from our last visit. Participants enthusiastically expressed interest in incorporating workforce planning into the upcoming Educational Master Planning and integrating their work with Guided Pathways. This year the participants plan to align workforce efforts, define roles and responsibilities, and update the decision-making manual accordingly.

Suggestions for Sustaining Progress

- Participants expressed interest in developing a short-term plan (18 months) for workforce development. The Team supports this concept to maintain progress and momentum.
- Continue discussions on how workforce development efforts align with Guided Pathways.
- The District and Colleges are urged to complete their work to develop and communicate a function map for WED that clearly differentiates the roles and responsibilities of District Services and the Colleges, and incorporate the results into the decision-making manual.

C. District-Level Student Success Performance Metrics (SCFF) and Planning

Ventura County Community College District had two objectives in their Innovation and Effectiveness Plan:

1. Develop performance metrics aligned with the CCCC Student Centered Funding model.
2. Establish and implement a program review and planning process for District service units.

Progress

VCCCD’s progress on these objectives includes:

Analyses of the SCFF. The Cambridge West consulting firm analyzed how the District and Colleges rank compared to others in the State. Overall, the District and Colleges performed well under the funding formula. The report was presented to the Board of Trustees. A dashboard is being developed to track their results on various metrics such as the number of awards. They are working collaboratively to ensure agreement on how the outcomes are measured and calculated, including on which metrics the District is best suited to focus. There is continued interest in mitigating any negative impacts of the SCFF to the District’s budget allocation model, protecting each individual College’s baseline funding and ensuring each a predictable “safety net.” The District has spent time researching allocation models at other similar-sized districts.

The conversations that have occurred between researchers and finance staff proved highly effective and there are plans to continue these discussions. Initial conversations about predictive analytics have taken place and will continue with the Interim Vice Chancellor of Institutional Effectiveness. The District is in the process of moving its data to the cloud, so the development of a data warehouse is temporarily on hold. However, a business process analysis is scheduled for November to consider possible improvements to student degree completion.

District Program Review. The District is considering exemplars of program review. The Colleges are sharing their templates and processes with District Services and there are discussions about the best platform to use (two are using TracDat and one is using eLumen). A pilot is planned for a couple of departments before full implementation.

Suggestions for Sustaining Progress

- Continue the Taskforce meetings on the SCFF and its implications for the District and Colleges.
- The colleges have offered to share their program review processes and review their software/formatting with each other and district services. The PRT encourages them to jointly adopt a single software system, if possible. The District is encouraged to review the examples of program review from other colleges included on the Menu of Options. Since two climate surveys were recently conducted (one by CBT and another by Modern Think), District services could use those results as a baseline measure of satisfaction and performance, incorporating the data into a service unit review.

Suggestions for Sustaining Progress on All Three Areas

- The District can capitalize on their successes to continue to build momentum. The District is cautioned not to over-rely on consultants, but the team understands that an “expert” is often more persuasive than administrators on an issue with which they’ve been struggling.
- Identify “champions” and leaders to support the initiatives. The participants are stretched very thin and will need additional support to maintain progress. The team understands the impact of staff turnover and movement along with the pressures created by negotiations. As soon as possible, find those who are willing to embrace the changes and take ownership of the work that needs to be done.

Conclusion

The Ventura County Community College District has made good progress on achieving the objectives identified in their Innovation and Effectiveness Plan, particularly in light of the staffing changes and gaps, the intense workloads, and a number of other pressures on the organization. The team commends the leaders and participants who have continued to propel the District and Colleges forward. We are hopeful that momentum can be built upon and sustained over the long term.