
Innovation & Student Success

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**A national study by the
League for Innovation in the
Community College
funded by
MetLife Foundation**

O'Banion & Weidner, 2010



Framework for the Project

- **The community college is an American social innovation.**
- **The community college is a crucible of innovation.**



Key Questions

- **What is the nature of innovation in the community college environment?**
- **Who are the innovators?**
- **How does the process of innovation work?**
- **What is the impact of innovations?**



Project Activities

- **Surveyed 400 winners of the League's Innovation of the Year Award**
- **Video-taped interviews with more than 40 selected award winners**
- **Analyzed 173 innovations**
- **Surveyed the 19 League Representatives and 800 CEOs of the Alliance for Innovation on characteristics that encourage and support innovation**



**So, what did we learn
about
Innovation in the
Community College?**



Definitions of Innovation

- **The development or adoption of new or existing ideas for the purpose of improving policies, programs, practices, or personnel**
- **The creation of new opportunities that are transformative**



What are the Innovations?

- **Total of 25 different categories of innovation**
 - **Course & Program Development—23%**
 - **Faculty & Staff Development—13%**
 - **Student Services—10%**
 - **Instruction—10%**
 - **Workforce Development—7%**



Who Are the Innovators ?

- **Full-Time Faculty—44%**
- **Administrators—26%**
- **Classified Staff—5%**



How Are the Innovators Organized?

- **85% of awards to teams**
 - Teams of 2-3—32%
 - Teams of 4-6—29%
 - Teams of 7-10—15%
 - Teams of 11 plus—9%
- **15% of awards to a single person**



Whose Idea Was It?

- **50% an original idea**
- **50% an adaptation of an existing idea, with or without original elements added**



What Helped Innovations Succeed?

- **Enthusiasm/perseverance of team—71%**
- **Need for the innovation—46%**
- **Culture supports/encourages innovation—44%**
- **Support of college leaders—38%**
- **Support from colleagues—27%**



What Are the Barriers to Success?

- Lack of time—51%
- Logistical/technical issues—30%
- Unanticipated problems—24%
- Lack of financial support & resources—21%
- Magnitude of the project—21%
- Lack of support from college leaders—6%



How Did the Innovation Impact Your College?

- Seen as value to the college by college leaders—70%
- Embedded in college culture—55%
- Changed individual behavior—51%
- Adopted by others—32%
- Helped improve college's strategic plan—24%



How Do You Know the Innovation Had Impact?

- Faculty/staff testimonies or anecdotes—59%
- Student testimonies/anecdotes—52%
- Student surveys—41%
- Faculty surveys—24%
- Data: retention, course completion, etc.—24%



How Was the Innovation Made Sustainable?

- **Staff assigned responsibility—53%**
- **Innovation expanded to serve more students & faculty—44%**
- **Incorporated in annual budget—40%**
- **Organizational structures created to support the innovation—36%**
- **Critical mass champions innovation—27%**



What Else Did We Find?

- **Funding for Innovations**
- **Importance of Recognition or Awards**
- **Importance of Institutional Culture**



A Culture that Supports and Encourages Innovation

- College leaders visibly support and encourage innovation—90%
- Risk-taking is encouraged; faculty/staff do not fear failure—84%
- Faculty/staff are encouraged to think creatively and unconventionally—83%
- College supports a variety of innovations—81%
- Innovation is recognized, celebrated, and rewarded—78%



A Culture that Supports and Encourages Innovation

- **Faculty/staff show pride in college as an innovative institution—75%**
- **Innovation focuses on strategies to improve student success—73%**
- **Importance and role of innovation are effectively communicated—69%**
- **The college seeks and supports collaboration and partnerships—68%**
- **Faculty/staff routinely evaluate and discuss the impact of innovation—50%**



Resources on This Project

- **League Website**
www.league.org/natureofinnovation
- **Written Report**
- **DVD of Interviews with Award-Winning Innovators**
- **Guidelines for Innovators**
- **Survey on Characteristics of a Community College Culture that Support and Encourage Innovation**



Making Connections

Student Success

The Completion Agenda

The Role of Innovation



The Mission of Completion

The mission of the Completion Agenda is to double the number of students who by the year 2020 earn a certificate, associate's degree, or transfer to a four-year college or university.



Completion Agenda

- **President Obama: 5 million more CC grads by 2020**
- **Lumina: 60% increase by 2025**
- **Gates: double number of grads**
- **CC Org: 50% more by 2020**
- **Ohio: 50% by 2020**
- **Anne Arundel: double by 2020**



In the history of our colleges

- Never so much support from so many stakeholders**
- Never so much funding from foundations**
- Never so much research on what works to ensure student success**



California Challenges

- **Less than 30% of students are college-ready.**
- **Only 53.6% of degree-seeking students ever achieve that goal.**
- **Of students who plan to transfer only 41% are successful.**



Student Success Task Force

“Recommendations present an opportunity for transformative change that will refocus our system’s efforts and resources to enable a greater number of our students to succeed.”



Chancellor's Goals 2013-2014

Increase Student Success

Reduce Achievement Gap



Perspective from Kay McClenney

“So while innovation is relatively easy, transformation is horrendously difficult, and cultural change is at the heart of the work.

The undertaking is intellectually challenging, administratively complex, and politically risky.

It requires all parties to imagine their way out of the boxes in which we work.”



Innovation & Student Success

The purpose of innovation is to improve and expand student learning—

which leads to increased student success and completion.



Innovation & Student Success

**Innovation is a collaborative
process—**

**it takes more than one lone
cowboy to keep the herd
moving roughly west.**



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**Innovation requires field-
testing and evidence of
impact—**

how do we know it works?



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**Innovation requires scaling
up—**

**will our colleagues agree to
adopt our ideas?**



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**Innovation should focus on
student success and
completion—**

**innovation for the sake of
innovation is a luxury we can
no longer afford.**



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**The future depends on
“leaders who are willing
to disturb the universe.”**

T. S. Eliot



Terry O'Banion

Ancora Imparo
“Still I Am Learning.”

Michelangelo

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