

The President's Column on Institutional Success



Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year. I trust that you had an enjoyable summer and were able to get some needed rest along the way.

At the College, we have had a busy summer that started with reviewing our strategic plan with representatives from all of our College constituents. Our focus remains on our mission and on our strategic goals of student access, success, and resources with the pursuit of excellence and the satisfaction of our stakeholders. We have also reinforced our values regarding: Our Students, Our People, Our Region, and Our Culture. Please take few minutes to review our strategic plan at <http://tinyurl.com/qytmobx>

Summer culminated with our convocation as a start-up for the fall semester. One of the main topics we discussed during convocation was the feedback we received from the College community regarding the Campus Quality survey we did during spring In-Service day. A surprising outcome (or perhaps not so surprising) is the fact that the top issues remain the same over the four times we have done the survey since 2003. These issues include communication between departments, morale, and rewarding outstanding job performance. The 2015 survey also included customer service as the third area of concern after communication and morale.

This communiqué will update you on the results of the responses that you shared during convocation and how we plan to address them.

Communication between departments

The most common response to lack of communication is busy schedules and lack of time. Based on the suggestions provided, the College plans to do the following:

1. Continue with current communication channels: emails (anytime needed), NC Statement (every few weeks as important topics come up), convocation (fall), staff-day (during Veterans Day in fall), and In-Service Day (spring). In addition to communication from the President's Office, the NC Statement will include employee and student spotlights. All College-wide events will include communication from different departments, not just from the President's Staff.
2. Make open forums College-wide events by closing offices and asking everyone to participate. These have been taking place once a semester when there is a 5th Thursday in a month. The dates for this year's open forum are October 29, 2015 and March 31, 2016, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Some attendance requirements may apply for essential personnel in a few specific areas.
3. The president's report from managers, currently gathered weekly, will be assembled and distributed every two weeks instead and in a more abbreviated format. More importantly it will be shared with the whole College community via email or link to a website.
4. Divisions/departments will be required to have at least one monthly meeting with agenda items that include updates from different departments and programs.
5. We will explore establishing/reviving our College intranet website where minutes and important communication from key meetings and committees get posted.
6. Communication by walking around the different divisions/departments/committees/buildings, especially by administrative staff, will be increased. I have already started to do that more than before, and will continue to visit with each group throughout the year to further enhance communication.



Phil Graham, a former quarterback of the Cleveland Browns, once said, "Communication is like playing football, the ball needs to be thrown hard enough for it to get there, yet soft enough to be caught." The College is counting on all of us, quarterbacks and receivers, to do their fair share to score.

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Morale and rewarding outstanding job performance



REWARD

The most common response to lower morale is a lack of appreciation and continuing recognition of outstanding job performance, hence the reason for combining these two categories. Great workload received a similar response followed by low pay. Based on the suggestions provided, the College plans to do the following:

1. We need to communicate more and in different media formats about the 13 multiple categories of employee recognition at the College as it was apparent from the survey responses that people are not familiar with them. These include: Outstanding Faculty, Outstanding Adjunct Faculty, Outstanding Staff, Tribute to Women in Industry (TWIN), Service Longevity Awards, Professional Growth Recognition (higher pay for attaining higher credentials), Commitment to Excellence in Service to Students, Commitment to Excellence in Service to the College, Pushing the Envelope (on existing activities), On the Cutting Edge (for new activities), Extraordinary Service to the College, Outstanding Performance, and Presidential Recognition Award.
 2. Most responses included more frequent and immediate recognition, even if small, when outstanding performance occurs by an individual or department, as it is the little things that make a difference. Some reward suggestions include: a simple thank you, a gift card to a restaurant or for gas, a ticket to a theater or theme park, lunch with the president, a picnic or potluck to celebrate success, a turkey at Thanksgiving, NC State apparel/cup, time off, or an employee of the month parking spot. The College is committing to do more in this area.
 3. The College is exploring monetary or internal recognition at the department or division level for achieving the College's strategic long term goals and improving them over the previous year which includes: increasing access by 1%, increasing success by 2%, increasing resources by 3%, increasing customer satisfaction, and/or reducing cost.
 4. The College will focus on hiring of more full-time personnel to reduce workload and to increase compensation for both full-time and part-time employees as we have done. Even though the College cannot make a long term commitment due to various challenges and future uncertainties, we will continue to hire/replace positions in strategic areas needed by our community and provide additional compensation or stipends as balanced budgets, increased subsidies, or reduced costs permit. Asking part-time personnel to participate on College committees is also another possibility.
5. The Cabinet is currently reviewing policies on telecommuting (work from home) and flextime (varying start and end time for workdays) in order to address a better work-life balance and to help relieve challenges associated with a greater workload.
 6. Continue with the holiday shutdown in December and consider the possibility of having a four-day, 40-hour work week in the summer that will reward our people with a three-day weekend while reducing the cost of utilities.
 7. Institute casual days and/or College-logo or pride days.

Customer Service

The most common response to customer service is training and professional development in the area of interpersonal skills, followed by improving technical skills. Based on the suggestions provided, the college plans to do the following:

1. Just as we have done this past year in terms of providing technical skills in the Microsoft Office package (Excel, Outlook) we will offer similarly structured training this year on topics such as interpersonal, people and social skills, being student friendly, ensuring civility and respect in the workplace, communication etiquette, handling difficult situations, sensitivity training, de-escalating tough situations, and working with special needs students.
2. Training on Bridges Out of Poverty, diversity, and socioeconomic barriers.
3. Facilitate a dialog to help clarify when students are customers and when they are not.
4. Title III training on student advising for new faculty.
5. CANVAS training.
6. Training on Encore and new computer systems.
7. Training on pedagogy and the use of information technology in the classroom.
8. Training/orientation for new employees on where to find policies and procedures, important documents, the College's structure including who to contact in different areas for assistance, and the functions at the College.



We have come a long way over the past few years and we will continue to improve by celebrating our successes, especially those of our hard working people, and addressing our challenges through a variety of open forms of communication. Our brand of accessible, affordable, quality higher education with focus on student completion, employment, transfer, and community prosperity, continues to get stronger.

I look forward to our discussion as I visit with you in the upcoming weeks and months. We will also have further discussion with staff during the Staff-in-Service Day in November. In the meantime, please feel free to share any additional ideas you have. The administration will continue to report on progress in the future. Thank you for your contribution to the team.

Dorey

RECOGNIZING OUR PEOPLE

Ekegren Plans Return to Africa!

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has approved Ken Ekegren's proposal as part of the **People, Prosperity and Planet** program. Ken and his students will design a clean cook stove, and travel to Malawi, Africa to set up and train local residents to use the technology.

This initial award is for \$14,960. The first round of this competition was capped at \$15,000. Ken and his team have the opportunity to apply for an additional \$75,000 in the next round.

Ken will be working with a student team on the project. While he expects the work to have a great impact on the students' future careers, he is certain the impact of their efforts will improve the lives of many families in Africa.



RECOGNIZING OUR STUDENTS

E-Crane Visits Kehoe Center



On Monday, August 17, Steve Osborne, CEO of E-Crane and Kelly Carl, Project Engineer for the company visited the Kehoe Center in Shelby to tour the facility and discuss the needs of their company. During one portion of their visit, three Spring 2015 NC State graduates who are now employed at the E-Crane Facility in Corpus Christi, Texas joined the conversation via skype.

E-Crane manufactures equilibrium cranes in Europe and installs and maintains them around the world. One of their offices is in Galion, Ohio.

Our three graduates are:

Joe Biglin, Service Technician, Neil Fortney, Service Technician and Jeremy Scribner, Service Technician