

Initiative Fund Staff Development Grant Report FY 2009

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**ALEXANDRIA TECHNICAL COLLEGE
STAFF DEVELOPMENT GRANT REPORT
2008 - 2009**

<p>Training Description</p>	<p>ATC Tomorrow Pathways Leadership Cohort III – “Introduction to Strengths and Discovering Your Talent”</p> <p>The intent of this session is to assist current and future leaders in recognizing an alternative path to increase productivity in the workplace by helping employees discover their talents and then aligning those talents with the organization’s overall objectives. According to Gallop, organizations have more to gain by emphasizing employee “strengths” rather than focusing on weakness fixing with their employees.</p>
<p>Expected Outcome</p>	<p>Pathways participants will understand the value of the world-class “Strengths Revolution Movement.” The learner will recognize the relationship between utilizing strengths and effective performance; demonstrate an awareness of the strengths-based model; identify the categories of the Clifton Strengths Finder top five; differentiate the patterns of behavior related to individual themes of talent; and design and share a presentation that assimilates individual themes of talent.</p> <p>Outcome will be assessed by an evaluation instrument reflecting value and participation numbers upon conclusion of the training.</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>January 30, 2009 (4-Hour Session)</p>
<p>Sponsor / Partner</p>	<p>ATC Tomorrow Planning Team Joan Gilbertson, Presenter (ATC Customized Training Center)</p>
<p>Action Plan Priorities</p>	<p>Priority 3, 5</p>
<p>Budget</p>	<p>\$900 Grant Received Covered Presenter fee of \$400; Strengths Finder Book/Inventory Fee @ \$22 x 20 participants = \$440 (1 employee already had a book); and \$74 for Refreshments</p>
<p>Project Recap</p>	<p>On January 30, we had 21 employees from the ATC Tomorrow Pathways Leadership Cohort participate in a Strengths Finder 2.0 session to learn about strengths-based leadership. We hired Joan Gilbertson, a faculty member of the college who provides this particular training as part of her expertise. All members completed an online assessment to identify their top 5 talents prior to the session. Once these talents were identified, the cohort group was able to begin the journey of developing those talents into strengths. This tool helped our participants uncover the types of activities (executing, influencing, relationship building, or strategic thinking) that give them energy. When engaged in activities that give us energy, it increases our engagement on the job as well as improves our personal productivity.</p>
<p>Impact</p>	<p>The objective was to allow our ATC Tomorrow Pathways Leadership Cohort to learn what their top 5 talents are and to develop those talents into strengths. An evaluation of the training was administered upon conclusion of the session with very high ratings. The group felt that a benefit in learning about what our strengths are and those of our co-workers could help us positively impact the needs and issues at ATC. It is important to have different strengths in order to create a well-rounded team.</p> <p>In follow up, an opportunity to attend a Strengths Quest Training session will be offered at the college on August 12-13, 2009, for faculty and others who wish to attend. The instructor will be Mark Pogue from the Gallup Organization. Pathways members will receive a special invitation to attend.</p>

Reflection	<p>This 4-hour training session was actually a brief introductory synopsis of a larger training component. Time was obviously a factor. If time permitted, a longer session could have been scheduled so the employees could better understand themselves and their co-workers. We had a lot of open discussion and it was a bonding experience for the Pathways cohort, which was another goal of ours.</p> <p>We would like to offer this training for future Pathways cohorts, but would probably lengthen the session to a full-day versus half-day.</p>
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Training Description	Introduction to Spanish: A Communicative Approach
Expected Outcome	<p>ATC employees have excellent customer service skills which can be communicated in Spanish. Participants will learn basic Spanish conversational phrases, proper pronunciation, formal and informal greetings, and cultural norms to welcome Spanish speakers to our campus.</p> <p>Outcome will be assessed by an evaluation instrument reflecting knowledge gained through a participant survey at the conclusion of the training, as well as a count of participant numbers.</p>
Timeline	Spring 2009 (2 Sessions Offered @ 6 Hrs each = 12 Hours)
Sponsor / Partner	ATC Staff Development Team Catherine Scholer and Oscar Bohorquez, Presenters
Action Plan Priorities	Priority 5
Budget	<p>\$950 Grant Received</p> <p>Covered \$700 stipend for two presenters (12 Hrs Delivery + 2 Hrs Prep @ \$25/Hr x 2 = \$700); \$82 for Reprographic Materials; \$161 for Binders; and \$241 for refreshments (cultural food samplings over 6 training sessions)</p>
Project Recap	<p>We had 40 employees attend a 6-hour Introduction to Spanish class (3 days @ 2 hours each day). Our facilitators were internal to the college: Catherine Scholer (faculty member) and Oscar Bohorquez (Director of Intercultural Services). The two facilitators complemented one another very well. Not only did they provide an introduction to the Spanish language, but many cultural components were shared as well. What a phrase might mean to one person, may mean something totally different to someone else, i.e., a "piece of cake" or "smoke free."</p>
Impact	<p>The objective was to teach employees some basic Spanish conversational phrases, proper pronunciation, formal and informal greetings, and cultural norms to welcome Spanish speakers to our campus. This training was very valuable in that it provided insight and an increased comfort level to some of our employees to know that they can now communicate (although at a very minimal level) with our Spanish-speaking customers. Although what the group learned was at an introductory level, they now know how to pick out certain words and/or phrases to understand what our customers might want and to be able to connect them to the right people to assist them. A binder was prepared for each participant with the alphabet, numbers, phrases, calendar, etc. as a take-away and to study from for each subsequent class (homework).</p> <p>An evaluation of the training was administered upon conclusion of the session with very high ratings and kudos to the presenters. The majority of the participants indicated they would like additional classes to practice speaking to one another. This request will be taken into consideration and put into our staff development plan for the future.</p>

	In follow up, a three-credit Spanish class is being offered during Fall Semester 2009 (open to the public). It has been scheduled later in the day so that employees could participate without it interfering too much with their workday. Tuition waiver can be used or respective staff development funds can be utilized to help pay for the class. An email was sent to employees to advertise this opportunity.
Reflection	The offering of this class has been an enlightening learning experience for the college as a whole. Learning about the Spanish language and different cultures opened our eyes to “what we didn’t know we didn’t know.” As a result of this class, a list of words/phrases will be put together for the employees to use when needed. Many of our marketing materials are being translated into the Spanish language, also, due to the work of our Director of Intercultural Services and our Institutional Marketing Department.

Training Description	AQIP Training Sessions
Expected Outcome	<p>In response to AQIP Systems Appraisal feedback, the college is providing college-wide professional development on defining and publicly demonstrating college outcomes and performance. This initiative will provide staff with a national perspective on “Continuous Improvement through Accountability in Higher Education.”</p> <p>Stephen Spangehl, Director of AQIP, will discuss the changing environment of higher education and the need to proactively engage the issues of accountability and assessment. This professional development session will be one component of a planned multi-college Minnesota summit on accountability hosted by ATC.</p>
Timeline	January 8, 2009 (2 Hour Session)
Sponsor / Partner	ATC Staff Development Team Stephen Spangehl, Presenter ATC Academic Affairs Staff (Jan Doebbert and Gregg Raisanen)
Action Plan Priorities	Priority 2, 5
Budget	\$1,280 Grant Received Covered guest speaker accommodations of \$221; \$397 for airfare; \$1,168 for speaker’s meals and refreshments for guest college groups
Project Recap	<p>Accountability and transparency are the hot topics in higher education. What they really mean and how they are changing the entire fabric of higher education isn’t always fully understood by those in higher education. As policies evolve around these two subjects, it is important for those who work in higher education to be aware and responsive to the demands and challenges presented.</p> <p>In response, the college provided a college-wide professional development on defining and publicly demonstrating college outcomes and performance on February 11-12, 2009. This initiative provided staff with a national perspective on “Continuous Improvement through Accountability in Higher Education.”</p> <p>Stephen Spangehl, Director of AQIP, discussed the changing environment of higher education and the need to proactively engage the issues of accountability and assessment. This professional development session was one component of a multi-college Minnesota summit on accountability hosted by ATC.</p> <p>Participants were from: Alexandria Technical College, Rochester Community and Technical College, Lake Superior College, Northwest Technical College, Normandale Community College, Higher Learning Commission, Office of the Chancellor, and</p>

	<p>Midwestern Higher Education Compact.</p> <p>This diverse group came together to discuss the evolving reality of accountability and assessment. All discussed their struggles to both define transparency and accomplish it. Stephen Spangehl (HLC), Linda Baer (MnSCU), and Chris Rasmussen (MHEC) presented their view of accountability and measuring</p>
Impact	<p>The objective of this event was to make faculty and staff aware of the changing environment of higher education. The discussion was intended to help faculty and staff understand the expectations of outside entities that directly impact the college. The session with staff and faculty was well attended. The college has and will continue to have open conversations with employees about external expectations that impact the processes and culture of ATC.</p> <p>Another objective was to have colleges within the MnSCU system come together to discuss the expectations and demands of transparency and reporting. ATC hoped to gain common goals and practices and pool resources to meet these reporting requirements. The colleges in attendance provided positive feedback, and most have requested additional meetings to further these discussions and plans. Subsequent meetings have been scheduled to follow up.</p>
Reflection	<p>Many staff and faculty were unaware of the dramatic changes occurring in higher education across the nation. It was a powerful experience to hear from outside sources that the environment of higher education is changing and the college and system must change with it. It was a heavy conversation both in its message and delivery. In the future, it would be better to have these kinds of discussions in smaller groups and allow for interaction and engagement.</p> <p>ATC is often at the forefront of asking questions and investigating best practices. Therefore, leading this endeavor with other MnSCU colleges seemed natural. What the college found was that all of its peer colleges were struggling with the same questions. While all of the colleges were approaching reporting, transparency, and accountability differently to varying degrees, they were all asking the same fundamental questions underneath. From leading this event, ATC learned that its peers are seeking the same direction and willing to collaboratively seek answers. Most attendees were pleased with the conference. If anything, it wasn't long enough to finish discussions, whereas a lengthier conference would have kept some colleges from attending.</p>

Training Description	Supervisor Core Training
Project Description	Approximately 25 administrative and/or supervisory employees will be invited to attend a 1 ½ day retreat to receive training on coaching, conflict management, and performance management and evaluations.
Expected Outcome	<p>The employees will have the opportunity to learn and reflect on how to be a good coach who truly develops his/her employee; to reflect on how to handle conflict and learn some tools for managing it better; and to learn how to use the performance management tool to keep your work unit running smoothly.</p> <p>Outcome will be assessed by an evaluation instrument reflecting knowledge gained and its value through a participant survey at the conclusion of the training, as well as a count of participant numbers.</p>
Timeline	May 19-20, 2009
Sponsor / Partner	ATC Staff Development Team

	Jeff Hudson, Presenter (MnSCU-Office of the Chancellor)
Action Plan Priorities	Priority 2, 3, and 5
Budget	<p>\$3,525 Grant Received</p> <p>Covered off-campus facility rental @ \$600 (included housing for presenter for two nights); \$75 fee per participant x 19 = \$1,425; \$100 for material costs; and \$769 for food service for 1 ½ days</p>
Project Recap	<p>On May 19-20, we had 19 supervisors participate in a Supervisory Retreat to include ½ day of Effective Coaching Skills, ½ day of Effective Performance Appraisals, and ½ day of Effective Conflict Management. The retreat was facilitated by Jeff Hudson from the Office of the Chancellor.</p>
Impact	<p>The objective was to provide our supervisors with training updates since it has been many years (1998) since the majority of them have gone through the Supervisory Core Training once provided by DOER. The topics were actually chosen by the supervisors. Evaluations of the training were administered upon conclusion of each ½ day session with very high ratings. The supervisors felt that although it wasn't the best time to be away from the office, the training was interesting, timely, well organized, and a bonding experience. The supervisors felt that being offsite provided a confidential environment in which they could discuss issues and learn from one another. Everyone was encouraged to use their fellow supervisors as a support system in the future.</p> <p>Currently, the HR Office does provide supervisor luncheons to discuss issues and/or to present topics of importance or of an immediate nature. In the future, these luncheons will continue to include a brief training component, as well as a time for supervisors to ask questions or share information. In addition to this, a team will be organized to look at the evaluation instrument that we currently use for performance appraisals to make some improvements.</p>
Reflection	<p>Our facilitator did an excellent job, which makes for a successful event. Jeff was very flexible and went with the flow of the conversation, which was much appreciated. Although the supervisors learned information on various topics, a huge benefit was the bonding experience and the conversations that took place during the training session. All participants were able to bring up concerns, share scenarios, and get some direction on employee issues in a confidential and safe environment.</p> <p>We did realize that it is important to provide a networking venue for our supervisors and we probably waited too long to do it. Although we try to get the supervisors together for luncheons, not all are able to attend due to other commitments. By scheduling an organized retreat, supervisors felt obligated to attend and made it a priority on their schedule. In the future, perhaps a one-day retreat will be scheduled to provide a similar opportunity.</p>