

## CTE Retreats: Crafting the Future of CTE Programs at MPC, Spring 2009 and into the Future

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During the spring term of 2009, the CTE teaching faculty, other interested teachers (from Basic Skills and Counseling), Academic Senate representatives, and members of the Administration met twice, for lengthy Friday afternoon retreats.

The topics discussed included the future of CTE programs at MPC, the needs of CTE programs, and how the proposed Academic Affairs reorganization might affect us. At that time, we had a new dean, Laura Franklin, who was hired as the Dean of Economic Development and Off-Campus Programs. Her responsibility included, among other areas, CTE programs, economic development, the Education Center at Marina, and distance education.

The proposed reorganization made Dean Franklin the line dean for most of the CTE programs, which would have required the restructuring of some divisions that included both traditional academic and CTE programs. There was some concern about how this would affect the daily functioning of those areas and whether CTE programs were best served by the proposed reorganization. One outcome of the meetings was a consensus to revise the proposed re-organization plan in order to incorporate some of the faculty concerns, such as the need for some programs that have a link to a more traditional academic program to remain in a division that houses those "parent" disciplines.

As a result of the state economic crisis and the subsequent funding reduction for California community colleges, the district was forced to defer some faculty, staff and administrative positions. Among these deferrals was the Dean of Instruct, Arts and Sciences position. In order to fill the void left by this vacant position and in an effort to focus on supporting the college operations in Academic Affairs, the district opted to move Dean Franklin into the position of Dean of Instruction, and leave her previous position unfilled. As a result, the emphasis on implementing an economic development initiative and much of the work that CTE faculty had hoped to see her do has been postponed as the campus enters a "maintenance" mode rather than a "growth" mode.

In spite of our financial crisis, the work of CTE programs continues. In some programs enrollment has increased substantially. A follow-up CTE retreat will be scheduled in spring 2010.

## **Summary of Dialogue and Accomplishments**

At the first retreat, we discussed the need for a mission statement for CTE programs. However, after dialogue, the group felt that the current MPC mission statement represents the mission of CTE programs. The group worked as a cohesive unit on goals and objectives. Dr. Susan Steele, Interim Dean of Instruction, Arts and Sciences, moderated the meeting, and we divided into small groups to craft the objectives.

Below are the CTE goals and objectives developed during the meeting. These goals and objectives are clearly based on the institution's mission statement.

### **Goal 1.**

Develop and maintain consistent, ongoing outreach with both internal and external partners.

### **Objectives:**

1. Set regular meetings (at least twice each fall and spring semester) of CTE faculty and representatives from: Basic Skills, Counseling, administration, and the Academic Senate.
2. Encourage and support faculty to become members of community and/or professional groups in their fields.
3. Establish open lines of communication with the entire campus and educate everyone on emerging opportunities.

### **Specific activities under objective 3:**

- a. Set up a website for CTE/Economic Development, so we can post current information.
  - b. Have IT set up a list of CTE and CTE-interested people to get emails from administration or each other.
  - c. Improve MPC's website, so there is a more intuitive way to locate CTE programs.
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4. Develop an email directory of all the members of all the advisory groups and other appropriate groups, and send out a semi-annual newsletter. Include contact information for each program.
  5. Develop press kit/marketing tools for the community. At least one of the regular MPC ads should highlight specific CTE programs.

**Goal 2.**

Build job skills and develop higher order thinking for globally applicable skill sets.

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure that soft skills, higher level thinking skills, and industry-specific skills are incorporated into programs in the appropriate relative proportion so that students are ready for a global economy.
2. Ensure that the program level SLOs are appropriate to the industry standards.
3. Assess student attainment of SLOs to ensure that students' skills match industry standards.
4. Use the results of SLO assessment to improve quality of outreach, research, and instructional programs.
5. Provide relevant teaching/learning strategies that support skill development and preparation for 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers.

**Goal 3.**

Research, identify, and develop opportunities to grow the economic success of the area.

**Objectives:**

1. Request that Dean Franklin be assigned exclusively to support CTE programs and Economic Development.
2. Form a group of community innovators to advise Dean Franklin and faculty.
4. Purchase campus subscription to a searchable grant databases. Develop a mechanism for partnering in grant opportunities.
5. Have a CTE-themed Flex Day. Assure that at each Flex Day we have breakouts to discuss and share best practices. (There is some overlap here with the objectives developed by group 1.)

At the second retreat, moderated by Diane Boynton, Division Chair for Humanities, we considered obstacles to specific objectives and filled out the details of how we may be able to reach the goals. Diane provided each goal's group with a template that included resources needed and possible obstacles, to guide our discussions.

### **Outcomes of Second Retreat**

There is a need for an administrative organizer to call and organize meetings of CTE faculty. It was decided that once a year would be sufficient, and that the meetings should include not only the CTE teachers, but also teachers from Basic Skills, Counseling, the Academic Senate and representatives from Administration, as we did in the first two retreats.

CTE faculty want regular communication with the entire campus and the education community. It was suggested that we set up a website for MPC faculty and administrators, but we need someone to design, set up and maintain it. We could begin by asking Information Technology to establish an email distribution list.

SLOs were discussed at length. In general, CTE teachers are comfortable with both course and program SLOs, but it was agreed that we could all benefit from sharing best practices.

### **Epilogue**

The district has implemented over \$3 million in budget cuts. The state Chancellor's Office expects funding for community colleges to remain a challenge for the next couple of years. The Office of Academic Affairs is under staffed, and some important faculty positions have been deferred. Many at the college are working more hours as a result, so we have even fewer person-hours and less money than last year. Much of the work we had hoped to see Dean Franklin manage has been postponed.

A follow-up retreat will be organized in April or May of 2010 to discuss some of the issues that we might be able to deal with in spite of the current fiscal situation.