

Innovation Award

Leadership Education in Action Program (LEAP)

Dianne Van Hook Accepting

Developing the leadership skills of the faculty and staff and preparing them to successfully step into a leadership role in the future is one of the goals of College of the Canyons' Professional Development program. The College of the Canyons Leadership Education in Action Program (LEAP) was created to foster the development of visionary, pace-setting administrative leaders. LEAP is designed to promote the development of "agents of institutional change" while providing "big picture" skills and the knowledge required to lead and shape our district and the community college system. LEAP is designed to provide individuals who want to be leaders, at College of the Canyons or elsewhere, the opportunities to identify and develop the knowledge, skill sets and confidence to be successful.

In addition to fostering the development of a cadre of visionary leaders, LEAP is designed to achieve the following goals:

- To sharpen essential leadership skills that are not traditionally taught, including: Discrepancy analysis, Context and case building, Networking, Advocacy, Building internal and external partnerships, Resource generation, Anticipating outcomes and always having alternatives.
- Train skilled Community College leaders in-house
- Develop a network of mutual support among future administrative leaders
- Facilitate cross-departmental and cross-functional dialogue and the sharing of best practices
- Develop risk takers, entrepreneurs, trendsetters, big picture thinkers, facilitators of planned change, advocates, can-do, confident and accountable leaders.

LEAP is an opportunity presented to all classified staff, full-time faculty, deans, assistant and associate deans, unit supervisors or directors who are contemplating moving up in administration. Applicants are expected to have been with the college for at least one full year and have some leadership experience. During the Spring 08 inaugural offering of this program, College of the Canyons had 46 participants enrolled - 9 classified staff, 13 faculty, and 24 administrators. The LEAP participants meet on five Friday's throughout the spring semester for informal workshop sessions. Activities included visits to other campuses/ field trips; case studies, out of class responsibilities as well as group discussions throughout the program.

Each LEAP session was designed around one or more presentations focusing on "real-world" college district issues related to institutional change and development. Some of the presentations featured administrative leaders who have established reputations as "agents of change" across the state. LEAP sessions also offered a series of intensive "crash courses," designed to make participants aware of critically important skills and competencies needed to excel as a leader. This program was interactive and include team project work outside of LEAP sessions.

LEAP project teams were formed and participants put what they learn into immediate practice by applying the concepts and techniques they acquired to address real campus opportunities. Each team was tasked with a project that would be highly beneficial to the college. In an effort to broaden participants' perspective, the project did not have anything do with their normal work assignment. Each team was assigned an executive level administrator mentor to provide feedback

and suggestions. The teams were asked to research, strategize and develop a business plan for these new initiative that would be ready for implementation at the end of the LEAP program. At the end of the program, teams presented their plans and celebrated their achievements. The LEAP Solution Team projects that the program participants engaged in over the course of the spring semester provided creative, innovative solutions to real challenges at College of the Canyons. All of the seven Solution Team projects will be implemented in 2008/09.

The President guided the LEAP effort and took a direct role in its planning and activities. In addition, accomplished college administrators and system leaders provided input into the program and shared in-depth knowledge of the community college system.

The LEAP program has been amazingly successful due to the dedicated and thoughtful leadership of the LEAP facilitation team and college administration, especially President Dianne Van Hook, who has been involved in planning the program offerings and ensuring the success of each LEAP session.