



NCIA annually bestows the Instructional Leadership Award to active instructional administrators who exemplify academic leadership through their creativity and innovation; their sustained commitment to instructional issues and challenges; and their substantial impact on college organizations. In April 2009, NCIA recognized six community college administrators with Instructional Leadership Awards. These individuals will be highlighted in a series of abstracts that focus on their leadership philosophies and insights.

Lee Sloan is Dean of Business, Professional & Technology Services and Campus Dean for Del Mar College in Corpus Christi Texas. He is the recipient of the Instructional Leadership Award for Region 6 and was also selected as the National Instructional Leader. Beginning in 1994, Dr. Sloan began a series of comprehensive strategic planning sessions with college and community stakeholders. Under his leadership, twenty-two new programs have been developed and new partnerships established. In this abstract he reflects on the leadership experiences involved in developing and implementing these programs.

Developing Instructional Programs to Meet Community Needs

Dr. Lee W. Sloan

I was employed by Del Mar College as a Dean in 1994. Following a quick assessment of the division, I began meeting with the faculty, department chairs, and with leaders within the community to determine how well the College was addressing community needs. The common theme that emerged was a need for the college to develop new programs for highly skilled employees in health care, public safety, heavy industry, and emerging technology. The greatest barriers that were identified for the development of these programs included the lack of a common institutional vision, inadequate fiscal resources to support program development and implementation, and the lack of facilities appropriately designed to facilitate instruction.

The college administration was fiscally very conservative in 1994, even requiring faculty to “justify” having access to a computer outside of instructional laboratories. My office was initially equipped with an IBM Selectric Typewriter. Funding for new equipment or new program development was not in the annual budget. Therefore, I realized that we would have to seek external support for new program development. Working with the Department Chairs and a few enthusiastic faculty, we began a series of strategic planning meetings with targeted employers to plan for new programs and sources of funds to support their development. Key elements for success were the development and nurturing of a committed partnership for each proposed initiative, the enabling of the instructional leaders and faculty to attempt new ideas without negative consequences, the development of institutional leadership capacity, and the resolve to find solutions for identified needs outside traditional college boundaries.

Successful partnerships require that each party be able to

have their needs addressed while working for a common goal. The College needed fiscal resources for program development. The employers had numerous educational related needs that involved a commitment of time and energy on my part as well as the faculty and Chairs. I led by example, becoming heavily involved with health, public safety, and industry initiatives and enabled the faculty and Chairs the freedom to become more engaged within the community. By 1996, we had acquired funding through a collaboration of health care professionals to initiate the Occupational Therapy Assistant and Physical Therapy Assistant programs; expand the Registered Nursing program through distance delivery technology; upgrade Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting programs; and implement an Occupational Safety Technology program. The start-up costs, including two years of faculty salaries while the allied health programs were applying for initial accreditation and all laboratory equipment, were covered by external funding. The College committed to provide operational funds once the programs were established with student enrollments.

Through a partnership that developed with an area university, I was invited to serve as a Co-PI on two multimillion dollar research proposals involving transforming K-12 education. The university’s lead PI on these projects then agreed to serve as a Co-PI on the College’s first National Science Foundation (NSF) proposal, enabling the college to capitalize on a well-established researcher’s reputation with NSF. The proposal resulted in a \$1.5M award in 2000 for the development of Process and Chemical Laboratory Technology program curriculum. As a direct result of this collaborative engagement, the College was invited to become the only community college division of the Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES), joining

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15 research universities affiliated with the Texas A&M University's College of Engineering. Del Mar College would serve as the linkage between these universities and the community colleges across Texas for the development of state STEM capacity.

The College applied for a Computer Science, Engineering and Mathematics Scholarship (SEMS) grant, with the help of the TEES staff, to provide scholarship funds for STEM majors to facilitate degree completion. I served as the PI for this initiative, but also utilized College faculty as Co-PIs to begin building internal capacity. A few years later, these same faculty were developing NSF proposals as PIs, engaging additional college, university, and industry partners and providing opportunities for other faculty members to serve as Co-PIs. This has resulted in the development and establishment of additional College programs such as Information Systems Security, Biotechnology, and Geographic Information Systems.

To date, 22 new programs have been developed and implemented at the College since the strategic planning process began, including EMT/Paramedic, Occupational Safety and Health Technology, Physical Therapy Assistant, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Process Technology, Chemical Laboratory Technology, American Sign Language/Interpreting, Information Systems Security, Digital Animation, Geographic Information Systems, Aviation Maintenance-Airframe Technology, Aviation Maintenance-Power Plant Technology, Avionics Technology, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Fire Science/Firefighting Academy, Biotechnology, Pharmacy Technology, Nuclear Medicine Technology, Electroplating Technology, Sound Music Technology, Non-Destructive Testing, and Echocardiography. Although some of the new programs did not rely on external funding, the \$18M in external grants the College has received since 1996 for curriculum and program development has been the catalyst that enabled the College to effectively address the identified community needs for new Health Science, Public Safety, Heavy Industry, and Emerging Technology programs. Six faculty members are now serving as PIs on successful grant awards with numerous institutional Co-PIs. NSF recently designated the College as an ATE National Center for GIS with a \$5M award. Partnerships for the GeoTech Center stretch from New York to California, involving community colleges, universities, and industry. The Center's award is renewable for 12 years with total funding expected to be around \$12-15M.

In developing new program curriculum, the faculty and Chairs were asked to research state and national model programs, appropriate certifications or accreditation, and industry standards. As they met with their local Advisory Committees, this research became the backbone in the development of the final programs to which the local

employer needs were added. Texas utilizes a state-based course system, with all courses reviewed by a state team of content specialists every 1-3 years, based on the rate of change in a specific field. I serve on the State Leadership group with oversight for this course inventory and annually nominate faculty to serve on the review teams for all programs offered by the college to ensure that the state courses reflect the standards needed by the college and community.

The College also partnered with a local university to re-design the Register Nursing program to provide a seamless online program from ADN through BSN. After numerous false starts of trying to mesh the existing programs together, the faculty finally laid out the essential knowledge and skills for the nursing pathway, assigned common elements to modules, created exit points as appropriate, and ended up with a highly effective, online, modular program that enjoys a higher student success rate than traditional face-to-face instruction. The key to success for this initiative was the ability of the faculty to look beyond traditional instructional methods and institutional boundaries to create a program that serves the students and the health care field.

New programs also create institutional problems. The College did not have facilities to support the new programs being developed, growth in existing programs, or appropriate technology. Curriculum and program development grant funds cannot be utilized for the construction or re-modeling of facilities. New programs were being housed in temporary laboratories, remodeled for short-term utilization. Although the College had not yet proposed a Capital Bond project for new facilities, faculty and department Chairs were encouraged to begin planning for the "ideal" facility to support their programs and the proposed new programs identified through our strategic planning process. They visited various college and industry facilities over a two-three year period and developed a clear vision of the type of classrooms and laboratories needed by the College to support new and existing programs. Through the numerous community partnerships, broad-based community support was developed for the construction of new college facilities. The College's Board of Regents approved and presented to the voters a \$108M Capital Bond Proposal focused on Health Science, Public Safety, and Technology. In Spring 2003 the voters of the district passed the bond package by a 60/40 vote.

The Capital Bond program was able to initiate construction in 2004 as a result of the extensive pre-planning by the faculty. The architects utilized facility design teams composed of the faculty who had developed the vision of the ideal facilities, in the creation of the classrooms and laboratories. The plans for new programs and facilities

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for existing and newly established programs were able to be clearly articulated into the design process. My role was to ensure that the final design and construction process respected the instructional needs of the programs while balancing project budgets, timelines, and opposing requests. Between 2004 and 2006, 75% of the West Campus of the College was within a fenced construction site, yet instruction continued with little impact to students and faculty. Today, the College has state-of-the-art facilities to support Health Sciences, Public Safety, Industrial, and Technology programs. Utilizing external funds to help equip the new facilities was a major strategy in controlling project costs and many faculty members were well-positioned to assist in this effort. Numerous laboratories were almost fully equipped from grants, College Foundation pledges, or industry sponsorships.

Another major issue facing the College was an effective mechanism for the development and processing of external grant proposals and awards. The College had a Title V grant focused on recruitment and retention, but did not have a Grants Office, or the funds to hire the personnel and operate this support service. Faculty members were not involved with developing external funding for curriculum or technology. Those few faculty who were interested in applying for external funds to develop new programs did not have the prerequisite support system. The PIs of the early grants had to assume the responsibility for curriculum and program development as well as fiscal management. A proposal was made by the PIs of three of the largest grants to reserve all of the indirect costs earned by their projects for the future establishment of a Grants Office. In 2005, the College established a Grants and Sponsored Research Office that was funded for three years solely from the indirect costs earned from these grant awards. The College assumed the operational costs of this office within the annual operational budget in 2008.

Today, new program ideas are being explored as well as possible new facilities and opportunities for external funding to enable the College to venture into new arenas. The College has strong instructional leadership at the faculty and departmental level driving these ideas. All of the success enjoyed by Del Mar College can be realized by other institutions by following several processes:

1. Create a “shared vision” of where the institution should be in meeting community needs. This is often achieved with on-going strategic planning related to the instructional mission of the institution.
2. Seek out enabling partnerships, develop and nurture them until the members are prepared to move forward with an action plan.
3. Encourage the emerging instructional leaders of the institution to grow professionally and to enable them to try new ideas without risk.
4. Explore external funding opportunities to support the development and implementation of new or revised programs. Be willing to partner with other successful institutions to build internal capacity. A proposal failure is an opportunity for a future funding success.
5. Set high standards for instructional programs and use data to assess progress and make necessary changes. Keep your community partners informed.
6. Ensure that those doing the work to make the programs and funding opportunities successful are receiving the accolades for their efforts.
7. Continuously revisit your “shared vision” and take appropriate actions as it changes.

Professor John Daly, of the University of Texas' College of Communications, defined managers as “those individuals who do work while leaders were defined as those who get work done, inspire people, set priorities, and help others find the best way to get work done.” Instructional Leadership is about creating a shared vision, developing effective partnerships, enabling the instructional team to grow professionally and explore without risk, setting high standards, and finding avenues to overcome barriers such as a traditional curriculum models or inadequate funding. The instructional leader finds the right combination of factors to enable the institution to fulfill its mission, sometimes doing work as well as seeing that the work gets done.

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