

Foundations of Excellence in the Two-Year College: An Arkansas Perspective

Cossatot Community College of the
University of Arkansas
Phillips County Community College of the
University of Arkansas
Pulaski Technical College
Rich Mountain Community College

Two-year colleges: Lost in space?



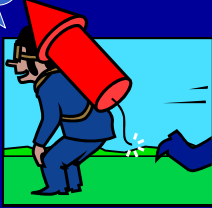
Pre-launch Preparations: How We Got Started

- Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
- Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges
- August Launch Training
- November Meeting



Blast Off: Unique Strategies for Launching the Process on Campus

Phillip, are you
sure we can
do FoE at Rich
Mountain?



- Things to Consider
 - Attention getter
 - Low threat
 - Soft sell
 - Theme
 - Food

Cossatot's Unique Strategies

- Kick off at Fall In-Service
- Fun with Steve Cole...our Emcee
- Volunteers as Dimension Team Leaders

Phillips' Unique Strategies

- Orientation 1st Day Back
- Brainstorming-In-service (one 3 campus meeting of brainstorming, open discussion of issues, dimension team round tables)
- Tips-Try not to get bogged down with data collection
- Thoroughly analyze and evaluate before trying to change things.
- Follow the FoE Process

Pulaski Tech's Unique Strategies

- Feed them cake!
- Green, the color of hope
- Invitations from President
- Brainstorming—campus involvement at convocation
- Tips: meet early, select Steering Committee chairs carefully

Rich Mountain's Unique Strategies

- Deliberate selection of Dimension Team leaders and members
 - Dependability
 - Group Dynamics
 - Longevity
 - Division
 - Nitty Gritty Gang
- Steering Team meets every other Friday
- Included students early (Debbi Clear)
- Controlled online administration of survey
- Dimension teams meeting in classrooms with technology stations (FOEtec)
- Inclusion of almost all full time employees (Survey and Steering Committee)

“Houston, we have a problem” : Unforeseen Challenges

- Things to Consider
 - Costs
 - Current organizational structure
 - Attitude
 - Staffing
 - Lack of information

Why does the VP keep calling the FoE process “Apollo 13”?



Cossatot's Unforeseen Challenges

- Not fully understanding what First Year meant...not just students in their first year
- Getting Started...time on task
- Skeptical about offering recommendations for change
- Keeping focus on First Year Students and not including all students

Phillips' Unforeseen Challenges

- Funding--At a time when money is tight, who will pay for this?
- The Importance of Buy-in
- Changing Attitudes--So, how do we know this is different from other attempts to solve problems?
- Expanding Leadership--Inclusivity
- Understanding the Process

Pulaski Tech's Unforeseen Challenges

- Funding for organized efforts to promote and support FoE
- Superficial support
- Misunderstanding or apathy toward information
- Delayed response
- Hurt feelings or embarrassment over findings
- Staffing changes

Rich Mountain's Unforeseen Challenges

- Budget
- Randy's visit too early
- Weather for Debbi's visit
- Low percentage of participation by adjunct faculty
- Lack of quantity of student involvement

Mission (Almost) Accomplished: Early Successes

- Things to Consider
 - Small things matter
 - Support is strengthened
 - Outsiders (to the process) are attracted
 - Strengths are multiplied



Cossatot's Early Successes

- First Dimension Report Draft submitted for feedback! Great Feeling!
- Realization we do some things well.
- Great conversation starters.
- Excitement from non-faculty...what they do matters.

Phillips' Early Successes

- Sharing information without overwhelming people.
- Making people believe that "we" can make a difference. We can't control students but we can control the learning environment and how we treat and teach students.
- Keeping the dimension teams on task.
- Asking people to delay taking action—"quick fixes."
- Regularly scheduled meetings and report outs.
- Putting fun into the process.

Phillips' Best Success

- Putting fun into the process (missing at first).
- Putting a few small but costless changes into place immediately.
- Connecting funding FoE projects to existing grant funded goals (Title III, Career Pathways, other).
- Functional Area Report Sheets.

Pulaski Tech's Early Successes

- Opening session brainstorming
- Compilation and dissemination of results
- Call for responsibility
- Division meetings
- Board meeting
- Mid-way celebration

Pulaski Tech's Best Success: The "155"

- Generates interest
- Includes everyone
- Creates connections
- Allows for "pre-plan" successes



Wow, I am so glad I thought up the "155" strategy. Look how far we have gone because of it. Now, where did Amy go?

Rich Mountain's Early Successes

- President's support and encouragement
 - Fall Convocation
- Controlled online administration of student survey
- 100% participation by all full time employees in the survey
- Faculty and staff buy-in in the process and survey
- Good job of completing CPI

Rich Mountain's Best Success

- Formation of Dimension Teams
- 100% response rate of F/S survey
- 56% response rate from students 223/400
- Grit Breakfast!!!!

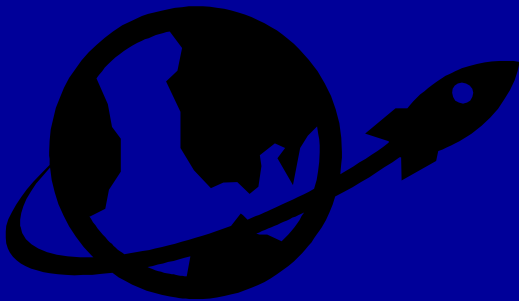
RMCC Grit Breakfast



RMCC Dimension Team TTTL

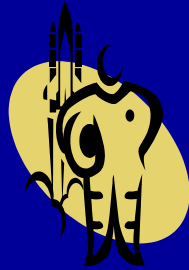


We're Going Places with FoE



Share Your Experiences

- Unique Strategies
- Unforeseen Challenges
- Early Successes



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