[MORE THAN AN] EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grossmont College Professional Development: Needs and Preferences

conducted in Fall 2014 by James Marshall Consulting, in collaboration with the
Grossmont College Professional Development Team and College Leadership

AIM

To identify, then prioritize, professional development needs—and thus approach the ongoing development of campus human resources in data informed and strategic ways.

METHOD-OLOGY

The needs analysis gave voice to all campus stakeholders through a collaborative process which involved – primarily – a **campuswide survey** which asked about Grossmont employees' perceptions of professional development priorities and current levels of competence, as well as past and current professional development. To further define key areas identified by each constituent group's survey responses, focus groups with classified staff, full time faculty, part time faculty, and administrators were facilitated. Of the **total 338 employees who responded to the survey,** 27% are Classified Staff, 32% Full Time Faculty, 35% Part Time Faculty 35.0%, and 6% Administration

MAJOR FINDINGS

In light of the primary purpose of this needs analysis effort, the **content emphasis of future professional development** is, indeed, the most significant of the findings. While there was "considerable variance" in responses, respondents ranked the following 5 competencies/potential topics (of the 15 presented in the survey) of **greatest importance** in terms of the college's success.

FACILITATING STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS

[knowledge and/or strategies that support students' academic achievement – in their classes and toward their academic goals]

- o For both full and part time faculty, this is largely about pedagogy. Part time faculty, in particular, emphasize that professional development should "first and foremost seek to improve the faculty's pedagogical prowess." *Key suggestions include: opportunities available throughout the year, key opportunities should be available multiple times, sharing pedagogical practices, observing each other teaching, engaging in non-evaluative, low risk dialogue around effective teaching.*
- o Faculty also articulate a need for better connections between themselves and Student Services, and envision gaining a better understanding of the support services offered.
- o Classified Staff note that priorities include understanding better the organization beyond their individual "silo" of operation and effectively training student workers.
- o Administrators also underscored the need to better know one another's work, and the different functions, products and services offered across Grossmont College.

FACULTY-STUDENT INTERACTION / CUSTOMER SERVICE

[how to do your job while providing friendly, welcoming, encouraging, and supportive service to our students]

- o Classified Staff rated this as the highest priority competency [*comments in the section above regarding student workers falls in this category as well*].
- o Faculty again noted the need for more knowledge of student services and pointed to pedagogy as also key in addressing this competency.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

[how to effectively communicate and interact with people different from yourself]

- o This competency was ranked 3rd by administrators, classified staff, and full-time faculty; 4th by part-time faculty.
- o Full time faculty who had been employed by Grossmont College the longest (more than 20 years) rated this item significantly lower than their less tenured peers.
- o Classified Staff emphasized having a better understanding of these subpopulations within the college. They also suggested a list of languages spoken at the college and a tool to address students with limited English language proficiency.
- o Faculty identified the need for training specific to pedagogy in diverse settings
- o Administrators recognized the need for cultural competency, highlighting that this could mean anything from basic awareness of other cultures, to adaptations to instruction, to ways to successfully interact with people different from oneself.

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

[staying current with or increasing your knowledge related to your discipline and the content you teach]

- o This competency was rated 2nd most important by full and part time faculty; Administrators rated their own discipline-specific knowledge as 9th most important.
- o Full-time faculty indicated a high degree of competence with maintaining their discipline-specific knowledge.
- o Part-Time faculty, on average, rated themselves less competent in this area and suggested that the professional development team should develop strategies that could tap into resident knowledge and make it available on campus.

TEAMING WITH YOUR UNIT

[working as a team in your specific department to support one another and successfully accomplish work expectations]

- o This competency was rated 4th most important by classified staff, 5th by part and full time faculty, and 8th by administrators.
- o Given that self-assessed competence in this area is lower relative to the previously presented skills/topics, teaming within the work unit merits consideration in the professional development plan.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS FOR FUTURE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTENT

While not listed as options to be ranked on the survey, the following topics emerged within the focus group sessions as needed future professional development content:

- ▶ Conducting Effective Evaluation / Performance Review
- ▶ Job Shadowing
- ▶ Mentoring and Succession Planning
- ▶ Quality of Worklife / Staying Motivated in the Workplace

DELIVERY PREFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTENT SOURCES

The Grossmont College professional development team recognizes the value of Grossmont College sponsored professional development, and opportunities outside of the college boundaries and online. Therefore, we asked survey respondents to identify the "right" mix of professional development between these two overarching sources of content.

- ▶ the majority of respondents indicated the "right" mix of PD falls between 80% Grossmont/20% outside or 60% Grossmont/40% outside
- ▶ While 1/3 of the campus prefers face-to-face PD offerings [especially full-time faculty], 1/3 reported that they are also comfortable with online PD offerings
- ▶ classified staff are most open to online PD offerings

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are observations and recommendations offered in the report to be kept in mind when developing of a professional development strategic plan.

1. **Making Good Decisions: Training vs. Performance Support**
   - o ask what skills and knowledge need to go into long term memory and what support can be offered to provide guidance during performance

2. **Roles for Technology**
   - o focus group participants described having frequently encountered poorly designed online training that failed to motivate. Careful thought must be given to how the PD team will ensure the online training is completed; confirm the objectives have been mastered; and realize the intended benefits when the trained skills are integrated.
   - o blended or hybrid solutions should be considered

3. **Perennial Analysis**
   - o be ever on the lookout for needs and successes within the organization

4. **Successful Programs are Built on Value and Confidence**
   - o motivation = value x confidence; designers of individual professional development offerings and the larger program should often ask: "What is in it for this audience?" and "What can we do to make them confident with their new skills?"

5. **True Professional Development vs. Training Events**
   - o remain attentive to the bigger picture
   - o one shot training events rarely result in lasting performance change
   - o research shows change requires ongoing, coordinated development efforts

6. **Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation**
   - o develop a reliable assessment instrument that can be used to collect data that is consistent across all PD offerings and includes questions about relevance, use of trained skills once on the job, and self-assessment questions that seek to quantify the benefits realized through the session