Critical Assessment of Leadership for Teaching and Learning at Schoolcraft College.

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The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical assessment of Schoolcraft College's capacity for leadership and support for teaching and learning. The review factors will include the relationship between faculty and administrators, the level of shared governance with roles and responsibilities, the importance of teaching and learning in strategic planning, and the importance of teaching and learning with support organizations such as: Human Resources, Information Technology, Student Affairs, Financial Services, Facilities and Legal Affairs. Finally, I will expound upon various means in which both Schoolcraft, as an institution, and I can contribute towards these goals.

Relationship Between Faculty and Administrators.

The relationship between faculty and administrators at Schoolcraft College has been steadily progressing in a positive direction over the last couple of years. This is primarily due to new leadership in the Instruction organization; namely a new VP of Instruction, as well as new leadership in the faculty union. The return of a former President of the Faculty Forum has prompted a positive and constructive change in the level of cooperation between faculty and administrators. This influence involves more active and collaborative teaching and learning methods while simultaneously creating harmony amongst the rank-and-file of the higher learning community. The coalescing of these two leadership positions, faculty and administration, along with a more mediating influence in HR leadership, has come a long way in helping to repair relationships between Instruction leadership, the faculty union, and faculty in general. This improved cooperation is leading the institution towards improved teaching and learning.

Shared Governance.

Likewise, this cooperation has led to improvement in the practice of shared governance as evidenced by the emergence of more cross-functional teams between faculty and administrators. Specifically, the recent formation of an Active Leaning Project where methods, furnishings, and technology are being researched and evaluated as well as the roles and responsibilities, now includes all relevant stakeholders from Faculty, Facilities, Construction and Design, Distance Learning, IT, Finance and Budget, Curriculum Development, and Instruction. This represents an opportunity to hear all voices and correlate data, so that unified and collaborative solutions can be clearly defined within the shared governance system.

Financial Support.

The financial support for teaching and learning has recently received a big boost via a multi-year effort to acquire a state-funded capital outlay project combined with a recently approved bond issue for Schoolcraft College. Portions of this funding will focus on implementing the resultant classroom designs from the Active Learning project. These novel collaborative spaces represent a beginning in creating flexible classroom templates for institution-wide, collaborative learning.

Importance of Strategic Planning.

All of this is possible by the importance placed on leadership for teaching and learning in the Schoolcraft College strategic planning process. Each fiscal year the Schoolcraft Cabinet (President and the top five executives), develops a set of strategic objectives that are presented and approved by the College's Board of Trustees. These strategic objectives become the basis of the President's annual performance evaluation as presented to him in a closed session of the

Board of Trustees. The main strategic objectives for 2018-2019 include the categories and qualifiers as represented in the following matrix:

Strategic Objective	Action/Delivery
Improve Student Achievement	Provide leadership and support to Guided Pathways, affecting both recruitment and retention. Continue to improve success metrics including graduation rates, transfer rates, retention, and job placement rates based on KPI metrics and targets
Improve Internal and External Customer Service	Improve classroom technology and consistency across all classrooms, to the point students perceive this as a competitive advantage. Develop data analytics capability to drive data-driven strategic planning.
Promote and Strengthen Community Engagement	Strengthen K-12 relationships with schools, students, and parents, emphasizing pathways to lucrative careers and systematically reaching all of our service delivery area.
Increase Employee Capacity, Leadership and Effectiveness	Encourage leadership development by supporting the acquisition of graduate degrees of strategic employee positions across the College.
Build a Culture of Continuous Improvement	Conduct contract negotiations with the Faculty Forum to ensure fiscal stability and maintain positive labor relations.

(Schoolcraft College, 2019)

The President, along with the Cabinet executives, generate and present an annual Accomplishments Report to the Board of Trustees, which is structured around the Schoolcraft College Strategic Objectives. The report discusses all completed and in-process activities that have contributed to the accomplishment of the strategic objectives over the last year. Since many of these objectives either directly or indirectly represent leadership in teaching and learning, they demonstrate the leaderships' level of competency and commitment towards achieving these goals. In addition, recent Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Academic Quality Improvement

Projects (AQIP) at Schoolcraft College have focused on improvement to the teaching and

learning environments and have been praised by the HLC reviewers by suggesting they represent

best practice and should be considered for presentation at an upcoming HLC gathering.

Support Organization Support of Teaching and Learning.

The importance of teaching and learning at Schoolcraft is apparent in the work of support

units like:

- *Human Resources* – contract negotiations in support of change in process and data gathering
  to improve the efficacy of at-risk student identification systems.

- *Information Technologies* – mission of "We Enable Work" and their strategy and focus of
  "We do not deploy successful technology, we deploy successful end users" shows their
  support for teaching and learning. IT is involved in the campus Active Learning Project, a
  next generation model classroom showcasing new teaching technology for faculty review
  and demonstration. Additionally, a new campus-wide wireless network will enable student
  engagement via support of the throng of student devices, HD video, video for the likes of
  FaceTime™, etc.

- *Student Affairs* – implementing mandatory student orientation and intrusive advising
  practices—two of the Center for Community College Student Engagement's (2013)
  (CCCSE) recommended, "high impact practices" (p. 6). Moreover, they have implemented
  the Career Coach System which uses a sophisticated series of algorithms to assist students in
  selecting the academic program most suited to them (Schoolcraft College, 2018).

- *Financial Services* – pursuing the aforementioned capital outlay project and a bond issue,
  making the Active Learning Project, as well as new tools and resources for support groups, a
  reality.

- *Facilities Management's Construction and Design Group* – has worked with the College's architectural firm in developing the Active Learning classrooms, utilizing flexible furniture in proof-of-concept rooms, and coordinating input sessions from the cross-functional project team in a shared governance effort to improve the College's teaching and learning environment.

- *Legal Affairs* – participating in the various contract negotiations for the capital outlay project, and responsible for the contract development and collaboration for the acquisition of various software and capital systems. The level of focus and effort in the legal preparation required in offering of a successful and lucrative bond issue cannot be understated.

All support groups are engaged in improved leadership in teaching and learning through a set of well-defined, strategic objectives initiated at the very top of the Schoolcraft College administration.

Conclusion

As Vice President and Chief Information Officer at Schoolcraft College, my assessment of the three most impactful actions, which Schoolcraft College and I can take to improve teaching and learning, are the same, and presented as follows:

1. Completion of the Active Learning Project and implementation of the new highly collaborative and engaging learning environments. Environments that enhance engagement by facilitating instructor mobility and allowing them to navigate physically amongst their students as opposed to being stuck in front with their backs turned to write on a whiteboard. Additionally, have students' personal devices wirelessly projected onto large touchscreens (e.g. MirrorCast™) to improve participation and student engagement. Improved classroom technology, as implied by my classroom evaluation of Acct 202 for

this class, can enable the most progressive instructor to improve teaching and learning by promoting student interest/engagement in the attainment of deep learning (Rouhiainen, 2016, and Bain, 2004).

2. Implementation of Guided Pathways (American Association of Community Colleges, 2018) methodology through the deployment of the Ellucian Student Planning™ module, and early identification/intervention with at-risk students through the Ellucian Advise™ module. These systems are both diagnostic and proactive, data driven, and used to determine a student's need for guidance and intervention to specific support services.

3. Most importantly, continued collaboration and open communication between administration and faculty. Last week I hosted a series of "IT Listening Sessions." The sessions were open to all faculty, administration, and online participants. The objective of the Listening Sessions was to provide an open forum of dialog where the audience would gain relevant information and clarification on the various projects and functions of the IT Department as well as ask questions of IT leadership. In addition, the distribution of the "IT Scorecard Survey" allows the campus to provide valuable feedback to IT leadership. The intent of which is to identify and resolve any and all IT-related issues in a timely and efficient manner.

We live in an exciting time where advanced methods in student engagement can leverage advancing technologies like wireless communication, video, and smart devices, making the learning environment more intimate, collaborative, and effective. If we also leverage the vast data and analytics available, huge improvements can be made towards inclusion, equity, justice, and improved success for underserved populations. This goes to the heart of improving leadership in teaching and learning.

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