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ABSTRACT

This document lists learning-centered principles, and discusses their application to student affairs practices in general and to student services programs at Paradise Valley Community College (PVCC) in Arizona in particular. Learning-centered practices in student service programs identify, measure and evaluate learning objectives; encourage students in active learning; provide staff training and orientation on learning; link new budget allocations to learning objectives; forge educational partnerships that advance student learning; build supportive and inclusive college environments; and deliver services any time, any place. The document notes that learning-centered practices manifest differently, and at a different rate in each student services area, with some areas more developmentally inclined and others more focused on process and structure. Asserting that learning-centered practices are more than good customer service, the report includes a list of criteria by which PVCC can measure its progress toward becoming more learning-centered and diagrams a model application of learning-centered practices in PVCC student services. (Contains 19 references.) (PGS)

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Learning-Centered Practices in Student Services

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Review of the Literature

The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs **by the American College Personnel Association, 1994**

Thus, the key to enhancing learning and personal development in not simply for faculty to teach more and better, but to also ***create conditions that motivate and inspire students to develop time and energy to educationally-purposeful activities,*** *both inside and outside the classroom.*

Programs and services must be designed and managed with specific student learning and personal development outcomes in mind.

Hallmarks of a college-educated person include:
a) Complex cognitive skills such as reflection and critical thinking; b) an ability to apply knowledge to practical problems encountered in one's vocation, family, or other areas of life; c) an understanding and appreciation of human differences; d) practical competence skills (e.g. decision making, conflict resolution); and e) a coherent integrated sense of identity, self-esteem, confidence, integrity, aesthetic sensibilities, and civic responsibility.

<u>The Learning Oriented Student Affairs Division</u>

1. The enhancement of learning is included in the student affair's mission statement.
2. Resources are allocated that encourage student learning.
3. Collaboration is essential.
4. We need to be experts on students and the teaching and learning environment.
5. Participation in institution-wide assessment of student learning is essential

Report of the AAHE, ACPA, and NASPA Joint Task Force on Student Learning – February 26, 1998

Administrators frequently fail to focus resources on those functions that are most effective in producing learning.

Deeper learning comes when knowledge and abilities that are practiced, reinforced, and applied over time... most promising and powerful of the new approaches – learning communities – are beyond the scope of any one department.
We should promote learning principles as the foundation for better teaching, learning and administering.

Learning Principles
Learning is...

- about making and maintaining connections
- enhanced by taking place in the context of a compelling situation
- developmental and cumulative
- done by individuals who are intrinsically tied to others as social beings
- strongly affected by the educational climate in which it takes place
- requires constant feedback
- also accomplished in informal and incidental situations beyond explicit teaching of the classroom
- grounded in particular contexts and individual experiences, requiring effort to transfer specific knowledge to other circumstances
- involves the ability of individuals to monitor their own learning

***Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* - authored by NASPA and ACPA**

Good practice in student affairs:

1. Engages students in active learning.
2. Helps students develop coherent values and ethical standards.
3. Set and communicates high expectations for student learning.
4. Uses systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance.
5. Use resources effectively to achieve institutional missions and goals.
6. Forges educational partnerships that advance student learning.
7. Builds supportive and inclusive communities.

Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

Part of a project initiated in 1986 under the auspices of the American Association for Higher Education, the Education Commission of the States, and the Johnson Foundation. Developed by Arthur W. Chickering, Zelda Gamson, and Luis M, Barsi.

Sample Items from the *Faculty Inventory*

Encourages Student Faculty-Faculty Contact

- I attend events sponsored by student groups.
- I work with student affairs staff on issues related to student extracurricular life and life outside of school.

Encourages Cooperation among Students

- I encourage students to do projects together.
- I create learning communities, study groups, or project teams within my courses.
- I encourage students to join at least one campus organization.

Encourages Active Learning

- My students and I arrange field trips, volunteer activities, or internships related to the course.

Gives Prompt Feedback

- I call or write a note to students who miss class.

Emphasizes Time on Task

- I help students set challenging goals for their own learning.

Communicates High Expectations

- I help students set challenging goals for their own learning.

Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

- I try to find out about my students' learning styles, interests, or backgrounds at the beginning of each course.

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The Student Learning Imperative Special Issue *Journal of College Student Development*, March/April 1996 vol. 37 no. 2, ACPA

PARADISE VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS BECOMING A MORE LEARNING-CENTERED COLLEGE IF:

(DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION & COMMENT)

1. **Learning outcomes have been identified and made explicit.**

2. **Learning outcomes serve as the centerpiece for program and curriculum development.**

3. **Learning outcomes are measured for the purpose of intervention, remediation and continuous improvement.**

4. **Learning opportunities are accessible to learners in a variety of formats and methodologies.**

5. **Learners are encouraged to develop relationships and connections with faculty, staff and peers.**

6. **Research about learning and learners is routinely considered and systematically incorporated into the college's learning processes, programs and services.**

7. **Learning is foundational to the development, delivery and assessment of student, academic and administrative support services.**

8. **The college's systems (policies, procedures, structures and technologies) are designed and evaluated in terms of their support of learning.**

9. **Learning serves as the focus of the college's strategic planning, budgeting and institutional effectiveness processes.**

10. **The college's employees demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning.**

11. **An employee and organizational learning initiative supports, coordinates and helps integrate employee learning.**

Compiled by Bob Bendotti, Dean of Administrative Services, Paradise Valley Community College

Paradise Valley Community College
Student Services

Characteristics of Learning Focused Student Services Programs

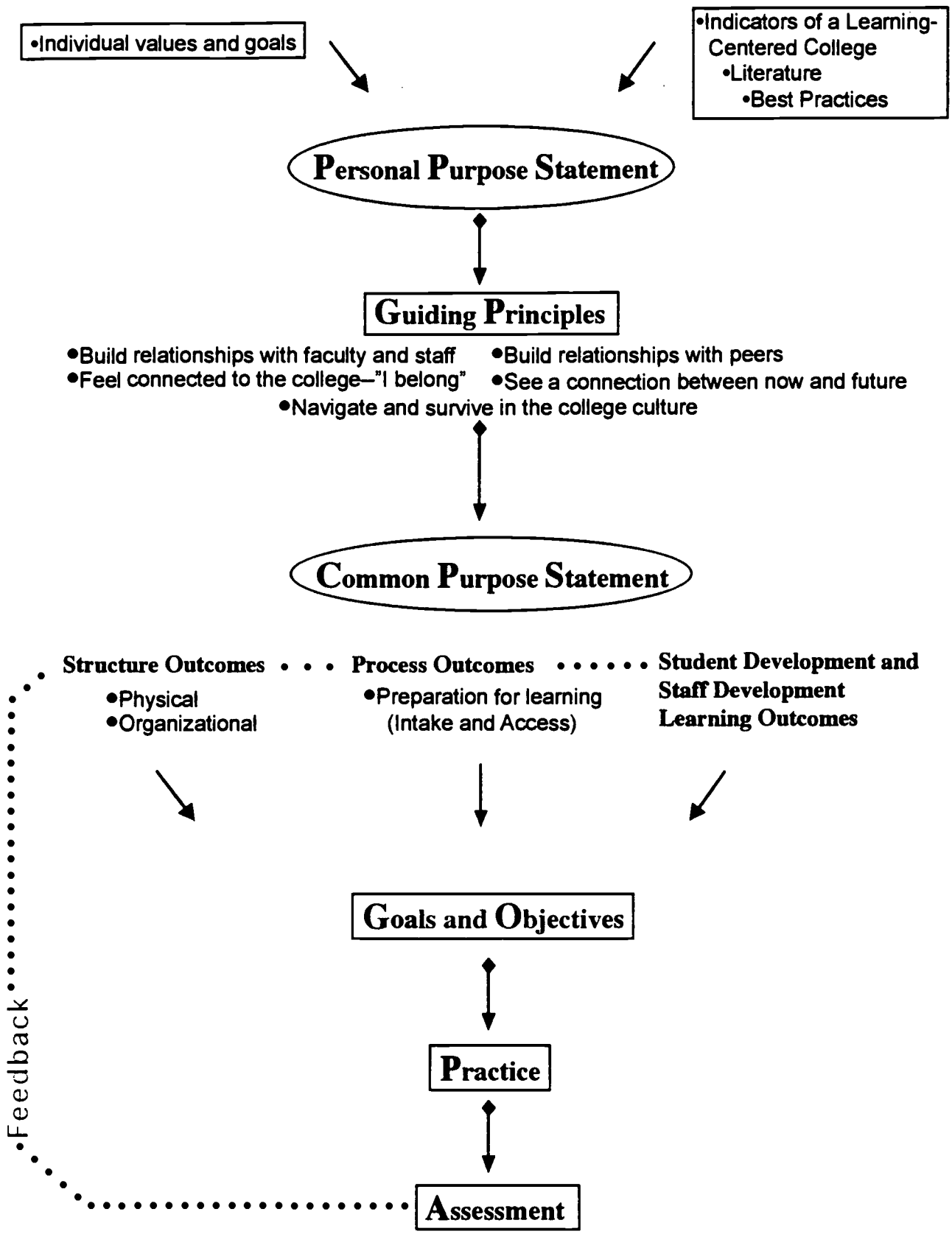
1. "Learning" is visible on campus (icons) and in publications
2. Campus ecology supports the development of peer group interaction, a sense of community (goodness of fit – "I belong"), and curricular activities
3. Staff training and orientation on learning
4. Learning objectives are identified
   - Example: As a result of participating in this service students will learn how to: determine personal and educational goals, improve decision making skills, conflict resolution skills, navigate organizational structure, communication skills, etc.
5. Measurement and evaluation of learning objectives
6. Goals and objectives linked to learning objectives
   - Example: *Goal* - Expand union programming to link with academic programs
   - *Objective* – Book culturally diverse music groups (tied to music, sociology, and anthropology classes)
7. New budget allocations linked to programs with learning objectives
8. Significant collaborations with faculty and programmatic partnerships, sharing resources
   - Service learning
   - Emerging Leaders
   - Puma Press
   - Athletics – virtual athletic department
   - Child Development Center – Early Childhood Education
   - Student services integrated into learning communities
9. Services delivered in a time- and placeboundless fashion

Program Example

New Student Orientation – Preparing individuals for the learning experience

- Significant time spent on goal setting and relating educational plans to future goals
- Assessing learning style
- Fostering the formation of positive student peer groups
- Correspondence to students preparing for the learning experience

Learning-Centered Student Services -- A Model



Lessons Learned

- Learning-centered practices are manifested differently in each Student Services area.
- Each Student Services area progresses toward becoming more learning-centered at a different rate.
- A high level of personal responsibility is required to implement learning-centered practices.
- Some Student Services areas are more developmental while others are focused more on process and structure.
- Learning-centered practices are more than good customer service.

Case Study Critique

- What works with the PVCC model?

- What doesn't work with the PVCC model?

- Do you have a similar model on your campus?

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