

LEADERSHIP UCO – (DEVELOPING THE LEADER IN YOU)

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Abstract

The University of Central Oklahoma is a state supported university. Like most state-funded agencies, the University of Central Oklahoma experienced a significant reduction in funding for this fiscal year. In response to this budgetary cut-back, the University initiated the Lean University© process which resulted in reorganization of the workforce and general operations. The Administration arm of the University implemented several programs in response to this need.

One program in particular, Leadership UCO, was designed to identify, educate, and develop the leadership skills of a selected group of faculty and staff members. Leadership UCO is a specially designed learning experience that influences participants in the management of time, talent, team development, budget, resources and risk. Increasing the number of qualified leaders improves UCO's ability to improve performance which will ultimately result in an efficient and economically sound operation.

Leadership UCO is a 10-month program coordinated by the Employee Relations department. The overall theme of the program is "Developing the Leader in You." Core program topics have been selected to move the latent leader into an active, productive leader and citizen.

Introduction of the Organization

The University of Central Oklahoma, the Oklahoma's oldest institution of higher education, was mandated by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature on December 20, 1890 as the Territorial Normal School in Edmond. The original purpose of the school was to train teachers.

On November 9, 1891, students met for classes in the Edmond First Methodist Church and the oldest state higher education institution in Oklahoma began its evolution toward what is today the University of Central Oklahoma.

Construction of the first campus building, Old North Tower, began in the summer of 1892 and classes were first held in Old North on January 2, 1893. In 1919, the institution's name was changed from the Territorial Normal School to Central State Teachers College and the training program expanded to offer a four-year bachelor's degree in education. From 1901 until 1961, UCO housed a laboratory school in which local elementary schoolchildren were schooled by UCO faculty and soon-to-be teaching graduates.

Two decades later, Central State Teachers College became Central State College. In 1939 the Oklahoma Legislature authorized the institution to grant both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees.

On March 11, 1941, Central State became part of a coordinated state system of post-secondary education overseen by the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education, and joined institutions with similar missions as a "regional institution."

Facts

On July 1, 1991, Oklahoma lawmakers gave the institution its current name – the University of Central Oklahoma, which more appropriately represents the school’s status as the third largest university in the state and its unique role in serving the people of central Oklahoma.

Today approximately 400 full-time and 255 adjunct faculty teach a total of more than 14,000 students enrolled in five undergraduate colleges and an office of graduate studies and research. However, as proven by a program of dramatic new teacher education initiatives, the University has not forgotten its original mission.

Statement (restatement) of the Problem/Initiative

UCO's Education and General budget for FY 04 was cut \$77,980,000, the largest single cut in university history. In response to this budgetary cut-back, the University initiated the Lean University© process which resulted in reorganization of the workforce and general operations. This process was designed to eliminate waste and find efficiencies across campus which would provide cost savings.

The Leadership UCO program is a cost-effective way of equipping, training and adaptively changing the thinking of UCO leaders. The ultimate goal is to provide a means whereby potential leaders can significantly contribute to the University's vision of a "Lean" functioning organization. The program provides tools for leaders to continuously assess themselves and their work environments for improvements. To achieve this goal, all UCO leaders must be taught that being a "Lean University" goes beyond producing more with less. It means systematically eliminating unnecessary and overlapping job-functions, processes and procedures and streamlining operations. The following core subjects have been selected for the initial program start-up:

Leadership Development

Ethics

Budget Management

Teambuilding/Ropes Course

Effective Communication

Time Management

Meeting and Event Planning

Professional Ettiquette

Design

As noted previously, this initiative evolved out of a need to streamline our budgetary outgo while enhancing our services to our clients. As part of the Lean University process, the Human Resources Department was split and a new unit evolved – Employee Relations/Training. The staff for this unit includes an Employee Relations Manager, Training Coordinator and Employee Relations Coordinator (a generalist). The budget allotted was minimal and contingent upon need since there was no prior operational history.

The methodology used to develop this program began with researching and cataloging different local and regional leadership programs. The assembled information allowed us to compare and contrast the programs to identify similarities and differences. The assembled information further allowed the Employee Relations' staff to ascertain the general success programs have in terms of impact on community development and identify characteristics of best approaches for effective leadership programs.

Employee Relations' staff is currently researching and drafting plans for Phase 2 of the Leadership UCO program which will be an advanced program.

Implementation

The Employee Relations/Training staff met in February 2003 to begin initial discussion and brainstorming regarding the formation of the Leadership UCO program. September 2003 was designated as our start-up month. The program was established as a 10-month program with monthly sessions from September through May with graduation in June.

Participants are required to meet every month with 1 excused absence; each participant and their supervisor are required to sign a commitment sheet prior to acceptance into the program.

Listed below is an outline of the initial steps taken to initiate the Leadership UCO program:

- Employee Relations/Training staff engaged in a brain-storming session with the Vice President for Administration and University Legal Counsel;
- Researched leadership development programs locally and nationally;
- Determined vision, mission, and goals
- Outlined a rough draft including prospective topics and presenters including a time-line;
- Formed an advisory committee to review and finalize proposed program;
- Submitted program proposal to the Vice President for Administration and University Legal Counsel for review and approval;
- Designed and developed a brochure, application, logo and theme;
- Placed the application on the Employee Relations' Training web site;
- Began the advertising process for the program and accepted applications;
- Established deadline dates including the application screening review
- Screening Committee met and review applications
- Notified selected candidates by putting together gift cups with balloons, candy and an invitation card;

- Sent out letter to presenters requesting their assistance on certain topics;
- Conducted follow-up calls and confirmed presenter dates and needs;
- System identified for accommodating speakers with printing services, lunch, transportation, parking, etc.
- Purchased supplies/food
 - 3-ring binders for each participant with dividers
 - Leadership on the Line book for each participant
 - Cardstock, paper, binding combs, print cartridges, etc.
 - System established for ordering refreshments for each event

Benefits

It is our belief that a program specifically aimed at leadership development can generate a personal sense of accomplishment in the participants, as well as create powerfully sharpened capacities for community change and resilience. Through participation, people build optimism in the community, defining the future as something that can reasonably be tackled rather than as a hopeless fate. Having gone through the training sequence together, the participants will have learned to work together and as alumni, will be accessible as a network for further community improvement. The following is a listing of UCO specific benefits:

- Advancing of each person's abilities, leadership qualities, and desire to improve the learning and living opportunities of UCO students
- Upon completion of program, commendation sent to their immediate supervisor and President Webb — copy to their personnel file
- Sharpening of management skills for potential management opportunities
- Commendation forwarded to Mayor Naifeh to encourage her appointment of graduates to City commissions, boards, and task forces
- Opportunity to participate in the Leadership UCO alumni group to develop further programming to benefit the campus and each other

Retrospect

This program has been in operation since September 2003, therefore it is too early to provide retrospective information. Responses recorded on survey sheets of activities thus far have been very positive.