



# INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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## *A Pleasant Approach to Outcomes Assessment: Indicators of Excellence*

Central Florida Community College has undertaken a new and comprehensive approach to accountability through a process of involving every college employee with a detailed series of indicators that seek to measure every area of the institution. The mission statement of the college provides a broad general umbrella from which 12 strategic goals are produced. These 12 general objectives provide the foundation for 48 specific and quantifiable Indicators of Excellence. These 48 barometers relate to the summary goal: "the improvement of teaching and learning and improvement of services to support the instructional mission of the college."

The Indicators of Excellence are quantifiable barometers that establish realistic goals for each area of the college. They are measurable, quantifiable, objective statements about college characteristics that are the results of an ongoing planning and evaluation process; they are attempts to assess the quality of every institutional component and area of the college operation: e.g., instructional areas, student services, fiscal operations, the physical facility, and community relations.

This list of indicators is distributed to all college employees annually. At least annually, and often more frequently, analytical data provide an accurate picture of where the college stands with regard to these indicators. Therefore, this list also documents where the college stands in achieving each goal and progress toward each over the last several years. The success of this endeavor builds slowly and increases in direct proportion to the number of employees involved in development and assessment of each barometer.

All employees—custodians and career service people to the president and trustees—are involved on a regular basis in attending to these indicators. Staff meetings periodically examine the indicators and progress made in each area. When data indicate that a goal has been reached or exceeded, college personnel responsible for that area elevate and modify the desired outcomes, establish new goals, and/or discard existing ones.

All goals require review and approval by an institu-

tionwide committee responsible for the Indicators of Excellence. This committee monitors and reviews the indicators on a regular basis. Additions, deletions, and modifications to the indicators occur after examination and approval by this committee. Planning, management, evaluation, and budgeting are closely tied to the indicators and do not take place without regard to these barometers.

These major objectives, or indicators, have come from many sources. The State Board of Community Colleges has established some measures of accountability for Florida's 28 community colleges; these measures are included as indicators. Federal requirements, state regulations, and grant application guidelines have provided numerous others. Still others have come from contemporary literature about community colleges—*Building Communities*, bulletins from the American Council of Education, and contemporary journals. Guidelines from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and specialized accrediting agencies, as well as suggestions from the administration, faculty, and staff also have become indicators.

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### CFCC's Indicators of Excellence

#### • The Transfer Mission

CFCC graduates attending the state university system will have cumulative grade point averages (GPAs) equal to or exceeding the GPAs earned by other community college graduates in the state university system.

#### • The Career Preparation Mission

Ninety percent of all occupational and technical programs will have an annual graduate placement rate of at least 70 percent.

#### • The Basic Skills and Developmental Mission

A minimum of 80 percent of postsecondary occupational and technical students enrolled in basic skills programs will successfully complete their developmental program.



- **The Community Education and Community Service Mission**

A minimum of 90 percent of the responses of surveyed area businesses, industries, etc., will indicate satisfaction with the business and industry programs available at CFCC.

- **The Access Mission**

The proportions of degree/certificate-seeking African-Americans, Hispanics, and other minorities will equal the proportions of degree/certificate-seeking whites who graduate.

The proportions of minorities, including women, employed by the college should equal the proportions of minorities in CFCC's service district.

- **Grades**

The average number of withdrawals and incompletes for all credit courses at CFCC will not exceed 25 percent of the total enrollment in all credit courses for a given term.

During a given academic year, the mean grade point average (GPA) of enrolled students in each degree/certificate program will not fall below a 2.0 GPA or better.

- **Achieving Student Satisfaction**

A minimum of 90 percent of the graduates surveyed will indicate satisfaction with curricular activities, including overall instruction, delivery, and content of courses, programs, and services.

Ninety percent of students surveyed will indicate knowledge and awareness of the programs and activities available at CFCC.

- **The Faculty**

Full-time faculty will teach a minimum of 55 percent of the FTE (full-time equivalent) generated by college credit courses.

Faculty entry salaries shall be in the top 25 percent of the community college entry salaries in Florida.

- **Institutional Support**

The college foundation shall provide at least 150 scholarships for 150 students each year.

The annual ratio of security-related incidents to the total number of students will not increase.

The number of arts/cultural events sponsored by the college/college foundation will remain constant or increase annually.

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When employees develop, refine, and assess indicators, they develop a sense of ownership in the goals, in their particular area of responsibility, and in the

college. The indicators have become a way of life at the college, and many employees have taken considerable pride in institutional accomplishments and become unofficial, but competent college public relations spokespersons.

Working with the indicators is a journey along a road of progress and development within the college. Frequently, the college may approach the destination; but the station usually is located just over the next hill or just beyond the little valley. The realization that this journey is both constant and ongoing causes a sense of community and shared ownership within the college.

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