“IMAGINE” NOTES
Thursday, March 28, 2002

“Thinking outside of the box, how can we encourage creative, flexible and innovative initiatives at LMC?”

In attendance:
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Thoughts Regarding Values

• Define “success” in #1. Include all the different ways a student can be successful at a community college.
• Evolving our learning so that it is truly dynamic
• “Responsible” communication needs to be developed
• “Dynamic” communication might mean to be very clear, integrated in our communication.
• Have departments review the values and provide feedback

Defining the Problem

• As adults, perhaps we have forgotten our creativity…….
• Creativity is a luxury. It requires time to be reflective. Do we truly have that luxury?
• It’s difficult to be creative without time – time to think, time to carry these things and do the everyday things – caught in a dilemma
• The difficulty of any organization to be creative. You need a process. It has to be in lieu of other responsibilities.
• Ideas take a long time to develop. It is not a quick process
• College hour needs to come back. People in comfort zone – don’t want to get out of that routine.
• If it’s not broken – people don’t want to fix it
• Or, even if it’s broken, people don’t like change.
• People get in ruts – been there so long.
• Catch them when they’re new so they don’t lose their ideas
• Honoring creativity. Honoring old dogs too!
• In a quest for creativity, we need to respect the things that work, not change just for the sake of change.
• Can you have creativity and fairness?
• Dissent stops the process. Why?
• Dissent is important in the creative process. Maybe the dissenters have a point we’ve overlooked.
• Success is going from failure to failure with increasing energy
• Can’t one person come into a group with a great idea? Do we always need a posse to back up an idea?
• What do you do with cutting edge ideas if you have them alone?
• Creativity comes also from dialogue
• Create dialogues with groups outside LMC, example – counselors at Liberty High.
• Perhaps we’re most creative within constraints.
• There needs to be a clear distinction between dissent with a purpose and dissent as a strategy (as a habit – to disagree, just for the sake of being disagreeable).

How Will We Know When We are Thinking Outside of the Box, and Encouraging Creative, flexible and Innovative Initiatives at LMC?

• LMC staff will be getting out of their offices and into the community and they will be excited about their jobs
• Whenever we have a project to do, etc, we will pose the questions: “Is this creative? Is this dynamic for our students?” This will change the expected thinking.
• LMC will have new and dynamic outcome objectives.
• The product will be more important than the process. Synthesis is the process of decision-making so that creativity becomes the outcome.
• Ideas will be evaluated for creativity.
• The decision-making process will be streamlined as not to squelch creativity.
• Institutional creativity will be tied to vision.
• There will be a documented balance between creativity and accountability.
• We would have a college hour.
• Ideas will not be immediately rejected.
• We will be written up in an article/book. LMC would be pushing the envelope. “Look at what LMC is doing now”! They’re not following the “rules”.
• In the high schools that LMC will be first choice/DVC will not be an option.
• The community would recognize LMC as a resource.
**Specific Solutions**

6 dots  Hard Rock Café – creating a place / space for student services that is more inviting – not same old, same old

5 dots  Define creativity as a central focus / idea for LMC. This will unleash people’s creativity.

5 dots  Establish a “Creative Think Tank” (like the Institutional Planning Committee) for people who think outside of the box. Recognize that we bring different strengths to be table.

5 dots  Establish a Creative think tank for reuse of “old” buildings and our new buildings.

3 dots  Bring back the “College Hour” to be used as a really creative time!

3 dots  Establish a policy that allows / encourages each LMC staff person (instructor/classified/management) to teach one less class / have one less responsibility) every four years and to use this time as a renewal – committing time to self-development. Like an internal sabbatical. Put LMC resources behind this value.

3 dots  Have staff development focus on creativity as a challenge to the college.

3 dots  Use Flex Time divided to continue the discussions of the Luncheon topics – using facilitators and experts in each of the areas.

2 dots  Survey LMC graduates to get longitudinal info about how they perceive their experiences at LMC after some time has passed.

2 dots  Host College retreats off campus with a focal point of creativity.

1 dot  Ad-hoc think tank to generate creative ideas for the Foundation and for grants.

**Other Solutions**

- Build a social context for learning.
- Build a culture of creativity.
- Put “creative” back into critical thinking.
- Besides town halls, continue to have smaller group discussions, which will allow for buy-in, info-sharing and much more input.
- 30 minutes a day when the college shuts down so people can read. Everyone read the same book and discuss it.