

ATDSFL Champions of Learning Best Practices Submission Form

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Q1 Organization (as printed on certificate):

Palm Beach State College

Q2 Project/Initiative Title:

Emerge to Influence

Q3 Name of Person Submitting:

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Q7 Write a brief summary of your project/initiative. Please limit your response to between 150 and 200 words.

For three years, all of the professional development offerings at Palm Beach State College have been in re-development and the result is a comprehensive set of leadership development programs - Emerge to Influence. Based on the results of a needs assessment, we customized a multi-tiered approach to professional development that meets our employee and institutional needs. The finished product is a diverse body of internal development opportunities for individual growth as well as the growth of targeted groups within the college community.

The Emerging Leaders, Leadership Excellence and Lead to Influence programs cater to three distinct levels of our institution's leadership. Together, they accomplish the following objectives:

- Identify and prepare the next generation of college leaders
- Develop and equip current entry level (lower level) managers
- Expand the influence and engagement of our current upper level leaders

All the program components are tied to employee engagement and recognition, as well as our core mission as an institution. While everyone has the opportunity to choose from a cafeteria style of personal and professional development workshops and sessions offered to entire college, our emphasis has been on these three cohort models designed for strategic development of our leaders.

Q8 What was the business/organizational need that led to this initiative? Please limit your response to between 150 and 200 words.

To ensure institutional continuity, careful attention must be given to the development of leaders, current and emerging. Each group needs a set of cohesive professional development resources for the impact of the programs to be effective. College leaders who are subject-matter experts also need to demonstrate the soft skills needed for effective leadership and a broader, high-level understanding of their role.

The College had a need to train and equip leaders with essential soft skills and re-brand the message that all levels of leaders understood and communicated, creating one voice and a culture of incivility and innovation. Our employees wanted structured professional development that would expose them to top College leaders and possibly lead to better opportunities for advancement within the institution. Preparing future leaders requires more than just a transfer of knowledge. Our next generation of leaders need a complete understanding of their role and how to expand their influence. The Emerge to Influence programs allow them to see the connection between their ability to influence and their impact on our mission in day to day functions.

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Q9 What actions did you take that led to the success of this initiative? Please limit your response to between 400 and 500 words.

The success of Emerge to Influence has a direct correlation to the multifaceted approach we took to its development. Starting with the needs assessment, we identified three tiers of employee leaders where we could leverage our objectives.

The Emerging Leaders cohort involves participants who are already demonstrating a desire to lead within the organization without necessarily having the title. Our goal with this group is to expose them to a higher view of leadership responsibility and processes that move ideas and growth in the College. They work and learn together for seven months and complete a group project to solve a college problem. The proposal is submitted to President's Cabinet. There is also a structured mentorship program built in.

The participants in the Leadership Excellence cohort include managers and supervisors who are already in leadership roles and who need further development in understanding how to be intentional about the professional growth of their teams, maximize the performance of their teams, while preparing themselves for their next opportunity. This cohort writes individual white papers which are bound and published for internal distribution to the President's cabinet and the areas with the issue they chose to tackle.

The Lead to Influence cohort participants are selected by the President's Cabinet and are identified as those leaders who are already successful in their sphere of influence within the College and are now ready for development in strategic thinking and the use of their influence on a broader scale. This cohort experiences a four-day, off-site institute at the end of which they are presented a problem from Cabinet to act as consultants in finding a solution.

The objectives for all three programs support our mission and strategic plan. The outcomes are tangible examples of the competencies we have agreed define success at our institution as stated in our talent reviews. Each program has an interaction with the President's Cabinet. These interfaces allow the cabinet members to become familiar with the rising stars of the institution and validates participants' efforts.

Q10 What outcomes resulted from your initiative and how did you measure them? Please limit your response to between 250 and 300 words.

The goal is for these leadership programs to drive the college's plan to expand, engage and excel while providing meaningful development for the participants. We measure our success on the ideas generated and implemented from these cohorts and the growth and advancement of the participants themselves. Since its inception, twelve of our Emerging Leaders program graduates have been promoted to permanent and interim leadership roles within the college.

Last fall the Emerging Leaders proposed the development of a Panther Strong Institute designed to provide an awareness of opportunities for staff to get engaged through collaboration. The idea was inspired by our leadership's vision of being listed on the Honor Roll of the Great College's to Work For survey. Engagement, professional development and shared governance were identified as opportunities for our institution and were addressed by the institute. The concept included a physical space and a website where employees from across disciplines could identify areas of interest to them and work with colleagues towards achieving common goals. The proposal received the administration's full support and the physical space will be dedicated in the next two months.

The power of these programs was powerfully demonstrated when earlier this year a cohort of the Lead to Influence program consisting of deans, directors and managers came together as a mock consulting group to tackle a real problem with enrollment management. The result was a set of prompts that led to a new perspective on what might be affecting the stop out rates of students from one semester to the next. All the members, including a construction project manager, were invited to join a working committee on the matter.

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Q11 What information would be vital for other organizations to know if they wanted to replicate your initiative? Please limit your response to between 250 and 300 words.

There isn't a one size fits all approach to professional development. Organizations may follow the same program curriculum; however, it is recommended that each organization place an emphasis on the learning outcomes that will make a significant impact to the company's mission, deliverables of the program, and employee growth.

Developing a professional and talent development framework takes time and effort, and it is the foundation of successful programs. Several items from our action plan informed the development our programs including conducting employee needs assessment, meeting with administration, and understanding the organization's mission and strategic plan. With this information, the establishing a brand becomes clear.

Program success comes with a strong curriculum and involvement from all levels of executives and administration. College leaders participated in the nomination and selection process and in presenting parts of the curriculum. This ensures program success and validates the purpose of their implementation.

During this journey, we found that flexibility is key. Cohorts enter the programs with varying levels of experience and formal training, yet all contribute to the outcomes. Participants hope to get different things from each program and many have individual learning objectives. In order to meet the needs of the employees, organizations should allow for adjustments in the program's outline and curriculum, while still ensuring that the outcomes are met. Providing continuous opportunities for feedback throughout the pilot phase will provide real-time resources to enhance the program.

Finally, the internal marketing of the programs made all the difference for the way they were perceived by the participants and the leaders who worked with them. Every decision including venue and length of time in program were designed to communicate the value the institution place on its leaders and their development.
